For use with all campaign settings

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

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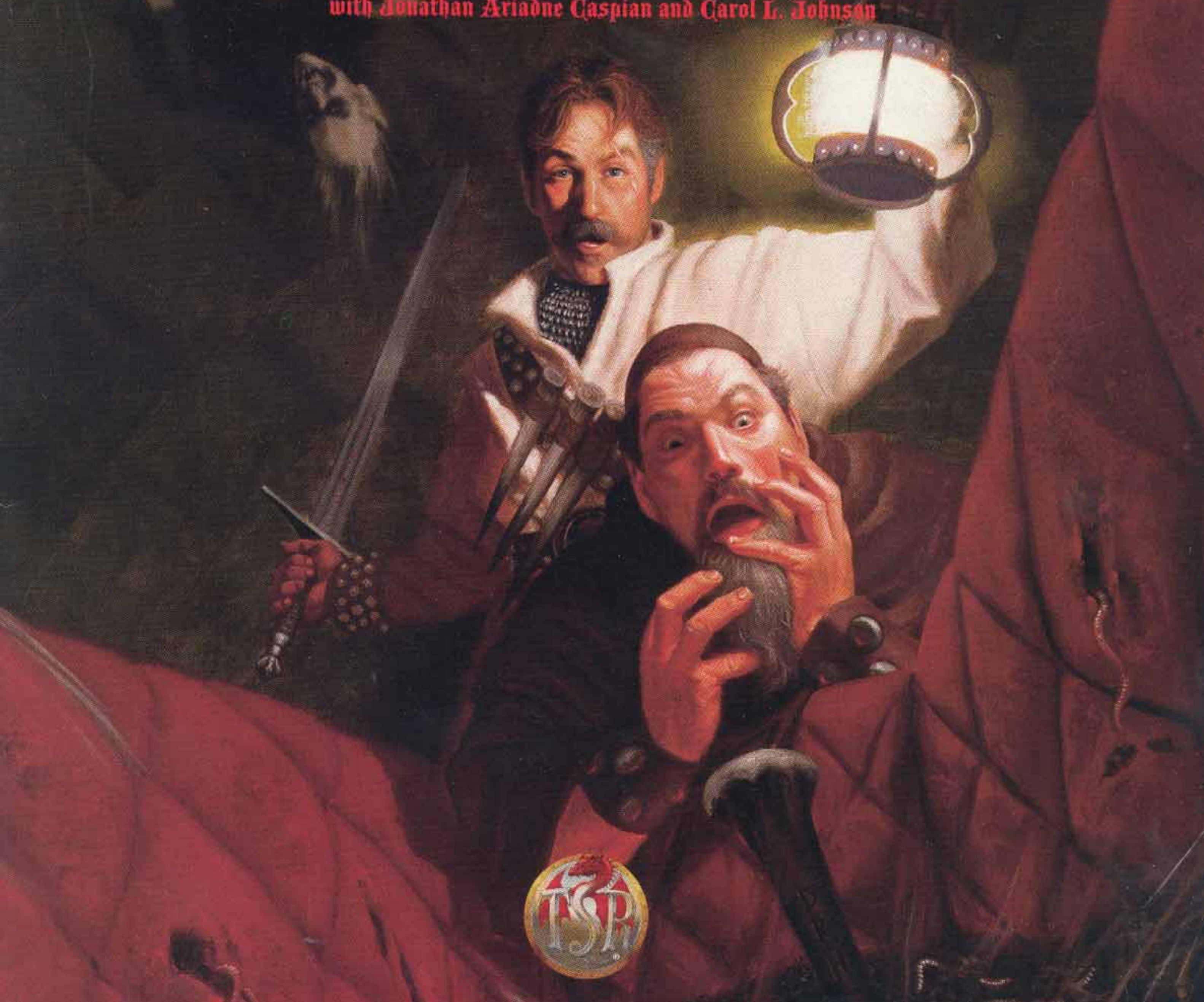
Ravenloft®

Accessory and Adventure

Children of the Night
VAMPIRES

by Paul Culotta and Steve Miller

with Jonathan Ariadne Caspian and Carol L. Johnson



TSR

Children of the Night: Vampires

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Dedication: In memory of Nigel D. Findley, the author who first gave voice to the RAVENLOFT campaign's premiere vampire hunter, Rudolph van Richten.

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The fight against creatures
of darkness is a
difficult, and
often painful one!
But it is a good fight,
and one that must be fought.

—Dr. Rudolf Van Richten,
Guide to Vampires Introduction

Introduction

For the Dungeon Master

Within this book are tales of 13 individuals who have become one with the spirit of Ravenloft. Each lurks in the shadows waiting for the player characters in your campaign to join them. They are vampires, creatures of passion that are suspended over the chasm between life and death.

Using Children of the Night

The material in *Children of the Night: Vampires* is intended to be flexible, open to quick browsing or detailed study. In fact, vampires is only the first theme in the *Children of the Night* series. The underlying purpose of this series is to challenge the notion that "a vampire is just a vampire" (or ghost or werewolf, in the case of future series entries). There are two main tasks on which we tried to focus.

First, you can insert each story into your ongoing RAVENLOFT® campaign as a complete mini-adventure. Many of the stories and characters can appear in any of the demiplane's domains, and a few of them fit well into a Gothic Earth setting.

Second, each vampire has been created as a possible recurring character, who can enrich your storylines with multiple appearances. One of the overriding principles of a RAVENLOFT adventure is that the horror must arise from the story being told. Since strong stories start with strong characters, we've made efforts to supply vampire nonplayer characters (NPCs) that can serve you in your campaign beyond this anthology.

The adventures, in which the heroes initially encounter each new foe, do not always end with the death of the monster—far from it. These scenarios, instead, are introductions, starting points for further travails, tough quests in which the player characters (PCs) might not be wholly victorious. Every tale presented in this volume features a unique vampire—each with a distinctive character and his own particular outlooks, motivations, abilities, and weaknesses. Most are powerful enough to elude adventurers not primed to combat them.

Each vampire has the possibility to become the heroes' greatest nemesis, pursuing the party across the domains of Ravenloft, or alternatively, staying one step ahead of the adventurer's determined pursuit.

Obviously, it is not possible to compact a fully detailed adventure into six or eight pages of text. Instead, we have provided a full biography—necrography?—for each villain, and a short scenario designed to introduce the heroes to each new threat. While not all clues are revealed nor all possible outcomes detailed, each adventure does include notes for continuing encounters, as well as suggestions for reaching a final resolution.

We have tailored both the adventures and characters within this book for a variety of player character levels. You can have your players encounter the vampires in pretty much any order; however, we linked a couple of the adventures together so that they can play in succession. Bear in mind that it is possible to have "too much of a good thing"; we suggest interspersing these vampires throughout a campaign rather than using them back to back.

In addition to the AD&D® rulebooks, you need the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set to play. The *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®: RAVENLOFT Appendix III* is a useful resource, but it is not required.

Terror Beyond the Mists

While the characters and adventures in *Children of the Night: Vampires* are drawn from the Mists of Ravenloft, a creative Dungeon Master should have no problem using them in other campaign worlds, too.

Consider the unique, veiled vampire Lady Adeline, for example (page 42). With her deadly hedge maze and its lethal array of traps and predators, she could just as easily be found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® or GREYHAWK® settings as in the Demiplane of Dread. The adventure featuring the crafty Lyssa von Zarovich (page 20) would fit quite well in a BIRTHRIGHT® campaign or in any other game world that emphasizes nobility and courtly intrigue.

The same flexibility holds true for all of the vampires in this book. With only a little effort, any of the adventures that follow can be used to add a bit of macabre terror to any AD&D game world.

The Mood of Ravenloft

Dungeon Masters (DMs) often excel at inspiring terror in player characters. Terror is a natural result of deadly traps and lethal combat, both of which abound in the typical AD&D adventure.

The requirements of a RAVENLOFT game are slightly different. The traps featured are often of a more psychological nature. In combat, the calm before the storm is an uneasy, chilling quiet that makes the confrontation all the more terrifying. More often than



not, the villains are one step ahead of the heroes, and the heroes sense this, with mounting fear, as it becomes clear that the final confrontation must happen despite their disadvantage.

Things lurking in the shadows; tormented heroes; tragic villains; dark pasts; secret vices... this is the stuff of RAVENLOFT!

You should use not only use the elements of traditional gothic horror to create a colorful setting, but also to set a tone of suspense that will heighten the horror the player characters feel when they reach the climax of the story—when the dark secret at the heart of a plot is revealed, or when the trustworthy ally is—at the moment of truth—unmasked as the villain, leading to a heart-wrenching confrontation.

The mood of Ravenloft is a fragile one, though. Beware that horror does not transform into disgust, or fear into farce. A menacing shadow can be far more terrifying than buckets of blood. Over-meticulous attention to every dreadful detail can numb the players' sensitivity and actually reduce the impact of key scenes.

For instance, if you say, "The weeds on the burial mound stir fitfully, despite the oppressive stillness of the air," the players may feel fear or foreboding. The details their imaginations create can be more horrific than all the purple prose you can recite. If you say, "The weeds twist in a frenzied dance, as the earth of the burial mound ripples and undulates, even as the air presses upon your sweaty brows, still as a dead man's rotting heart," the players might just stare, blink, and quite possibly laugh.

In addition to following the tips offered in the boxed set, you must carefully monitor the timing of your adventure in order to keep it under control. Secrets and hidden villains and allies must be revealed at just the right moment, and the stage for encounters must be set with subtle detail. While we give suggestions for the revelations of important plot twists, your tale might evolve at a faster or slower pace as your players focus on some clues and brush by others. Stay flexible, and don't be afraid to add further complications—or cut to the chase—if it will enhance your gaming atmosphere.

Effective horror in the RAVENLOFT mode requires a light touch from a deft hand. Keep this, and the "Techniques of Terror" outlined in *Realm of Terror* in the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set, in mind as you prepare to run your game sessions, and you might well unnerve even the most unshakable player character hero.

I was not born to the darkness.
Beauty, music, nature—
these things are sources of
great comfort to me.
They help me to forget,
as much as I can forget,
what I am.
Death doesn't end the hunger
for these things, Strahd.

—Jander Sunstar, speaking to his pupil
Count Strahd in Castle Ravenloft

Jander Sunstar

Biography

Next to Rudolph van Richten, the elven vampire Jander Sunstar is perhaps Ravenloft's greatest expert on creatures of the night.

Appearance

Jander is 6 feet tall and a sight of dazzling beauty. When he has just fed, his skin possesses a spectacular golden hue. Even when bloodless, his skin has a deep bronze tan. His eyes and hair are sparkling silver.

His initial confrontation with Strahd (during which he handled the *holy symbol of Ravenkind*) has left one of his hands permanently burnt and withered. He wears gloves at all times to hide this injury, as well as to prevent his touch from destroying plant life.

Jander generally disguises himself as a leprous beggar, hiding his dazzling features behind swaths of filthy cloth and covering himself in pungent waste to keep the curious away. While Krynnish elves exist in Ravenloft, Jander's golden skin and silver hair create a memorable impression on anyone who sees him undisguised.



Jander Sunstar

Elven Nosferatu, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	1	Str	20
Movement	18	Dex	19
Level/HD	13	Con	10
Hit Points	68	Int	19
THAC0	2	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	18
Morale	19	XP	19,000

Magic Resistance: 25%
Damage/Attack: 1d6+4 or by weapon
Special Attacks: *Charm* (–4 to save, may use voice alone), *shapechange* into wolf or bat form (once per day for each), Constitution drain.
Special Defenses: +3 or better weapon; immune to mind-affecting spells; regenerates 4 hp per round.

Dire wolf form: AC 6; MV 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ Large (12').
Bat form: AC 8; MV 1, Fl 24 (B); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ Tiny (1').

Jander is an elven vampire of an unusual strain native to the *FORGOTTEN REALMS* campaign setting. He does not scar his victims, nor does he feed off their creative energies. Instead, Jander feeds off blood and drains Constitution points, much like the nosferatu vampire described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix III.*

In addition to his nosferatu vampire traits, Jander withers plants with his touch, he can summon and control any normal animal within a five-mile radius of his location, and he possesses all the abilities of an eminent vampire (according to Van Richten's classification).

Jander is well over 700 years old, and quite possibly the oldest vampire in the land of the Mists.

Background

Jander Sunstar came from the isle of Evermeet. He had spent a full life as an adventuring ranger on the mainland of Faerûn when disaster struck: He was attacked and killed by a vampire, who made him his slave. Through strength of will, Jander prevented himself from becoming a horrid, murdering creature of the night, despite his need for blood to survive.

After a century of servitude, Jander slew his vampiric master, and sought out a former adventuring comrade in hopes that she might cure his vampirism. When this proved impossible, he left her and faded into the shadows, clinging to his elven nature like a drowning man.

For the next several centuries, Jander fed on the blood of animals and on the inmates of the city of Waterdeep's

insane asylums. Eventually, he noticed a patient by the name of Ana, whose beauty awakened in him emotions he thought long dormant. He fell in love. Jander cared for Ana as best he could, hoping to bring her out of her madness, but eventually she succumbed and died.

Jander, lost in grief, went on a rampage and killed everyone in the asylum. As he fled the scene of the slaughter, consumed by the thought of finding the person who had shattered Ana's mind, he was drawn into the land of Mists.

The handsome elf vampire entered Barovia, the domain of Strahd von Zarovich. At this time, Strahd was less then a century old, and Barovia was simply an Island of Terror and, quite possibly, the only domain in the demiplane. Strahd welcomed Jander into Castle Ravenloft and, as the decades went by, Jander taught Strahd about his vampiric powers and how to use them more effectively.

Using the gloomy rooms and chambers of Castle Ravenloft as his lair, Jander freely wandered Barovia in search of Ana's tormentor. Discovering that animal blood could no longer sustain him, Jander was forced to feed upon humans, just like his macabre host. This change in habit caused Jander's already tentative grasp on his former identity to slip.

Jander discovered Strahd's diary, and through it learned that Strahd was the one who had robbed Ana of her mind, as part of his recurring quest to find the reincarnation of his lost, beloved Tatyana. Realizing that Strahd was searching for the current incarnation of Tatyana, Jander resolved to stop him before any more innocents were hurt.

With help from a priest of Lathander and a thief, he retrieved the fabled *holy symbol of Ravenkind* and launched a plan to send Strahd to his final rest. While they were successful in staking dozens of Strahd's vampiric slaves, Jander and his friends failed to destroy Strahd, who escaped.

After this defeat, Jander realized he was just being used as a pawn by whatever dark forces held sway over Barovia. He vowed it would stop. In an attempt to free himself from this web of horror, he decided to end his vampirism by watching the sun rise one last time.

(The novel *Vampire of the Mists* follows Jander's history up to this point.)

However, as the sun fell upon him, the Mists swelled to protect him. Howling with rage, Jander wandered the Mists, gradually weakening from hunger. When the Mists parted again, he found himself in the desolate countryside of Forlorn.

Over the years, Jander has made several attempts to destroy Count Strahd and end the other vampire's quest for his lost love once and for all, but each time he has failed.

Personality

An embittered soul, Jander despises his vampirism and all things vampiric. He is troubled by his failure to defeat Strahd, and has directed his frustration toward other vampires. Jander has resolved to wipe out vampirism in all its forms, but the variety and frequency of these creatures in these lands troubles him greatly.

Combat

Jander tries to avoid conflicts with the living. Unless faced with spellcasters or fighters with exceptionally powerful magical weapons, he even ignores a vampire's *charmed* servitors in favor of the undead monster itself.

He relies on his ability to regenerate damage to absorb human attacks. He never uses his deadly bite, except when he, reluctantly, feeds.

He keeps a *short sword +2* and a *dagger +1* hidden under his tattered clothing at all times, along with two sharpened, wooden stakes.

He is also adept at using his *shapechange* ability in combat, and can change into any of his forms in mid-attack.

The Charnel House

This adventure is for four to six characters of levels 6–9 (about 40 levels). We recommend that you use this adventure as a sequel to *To Conquer Fear* (page 60) since Nira, the vampyre disguised as a cleric, is the agent who invites the heroes to Falkovnia. To fully capture the mood of the setting, review the information on Vlad Drakov and Falkovnia in *Domains and Denizens* in the RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* boxed set.

Background

Battling against the despair and bitterness growing in his soul, Jander continues to strive for some way to achieve Strahd's demise. He knows that he cannot return to Strahd's domain until he has devised a good plan for killing the cruel vampire lord.

Initially, Jander sought Azalin's aid, hoping that the ruler's hatred for Strahd would make him an easy ally, but the lich refused to see him due to some long-term experiment in which he was engaged. Instead, one of Azalin's advisers suggested that Jander investigate Vlad Drakov of Falkovnia, insinuating that the brutal ruler's bloodthirst ran far deeper than mere cruelty of nature.

After a short time in Lekar, Drakov's seat of power,

Jander determined that Drakov was no vampire. Nevertheless, Jander uncovered another horror—a nest of vampyres preying upon the citizens of the city.

Jander plans to destroy the pseudo-vampires, but so far he has been unable to breach the antivampire measures protecting their lair.

In retaliation for Jander's interest, the vampyres sent Drakov proof of a vampire killing in his city. While Drakov has no particular love for his people, the idea that anyone would attempt to rob him of his subjects (viewing the vampire more as a poacher than a threat) enraged the evil warlord. Wary of his foe's potential power, Drakov ordered all night patrols tripled and equipped all his troops with the weapons and protections specific to vampires.

Initially, the streets buzzed with whispers that Drakov had gone completely insane, since the townspeople consider vampires nothing more than legends. Yet, after zealous soldiers impaled 100 men and women in their search, the whispering stopped.

Jander feeds when necessary at the local insane asylum. These days, Jander is extra careful not to kill noticeably or to cause any alarm that might arouse Drakov's interest.

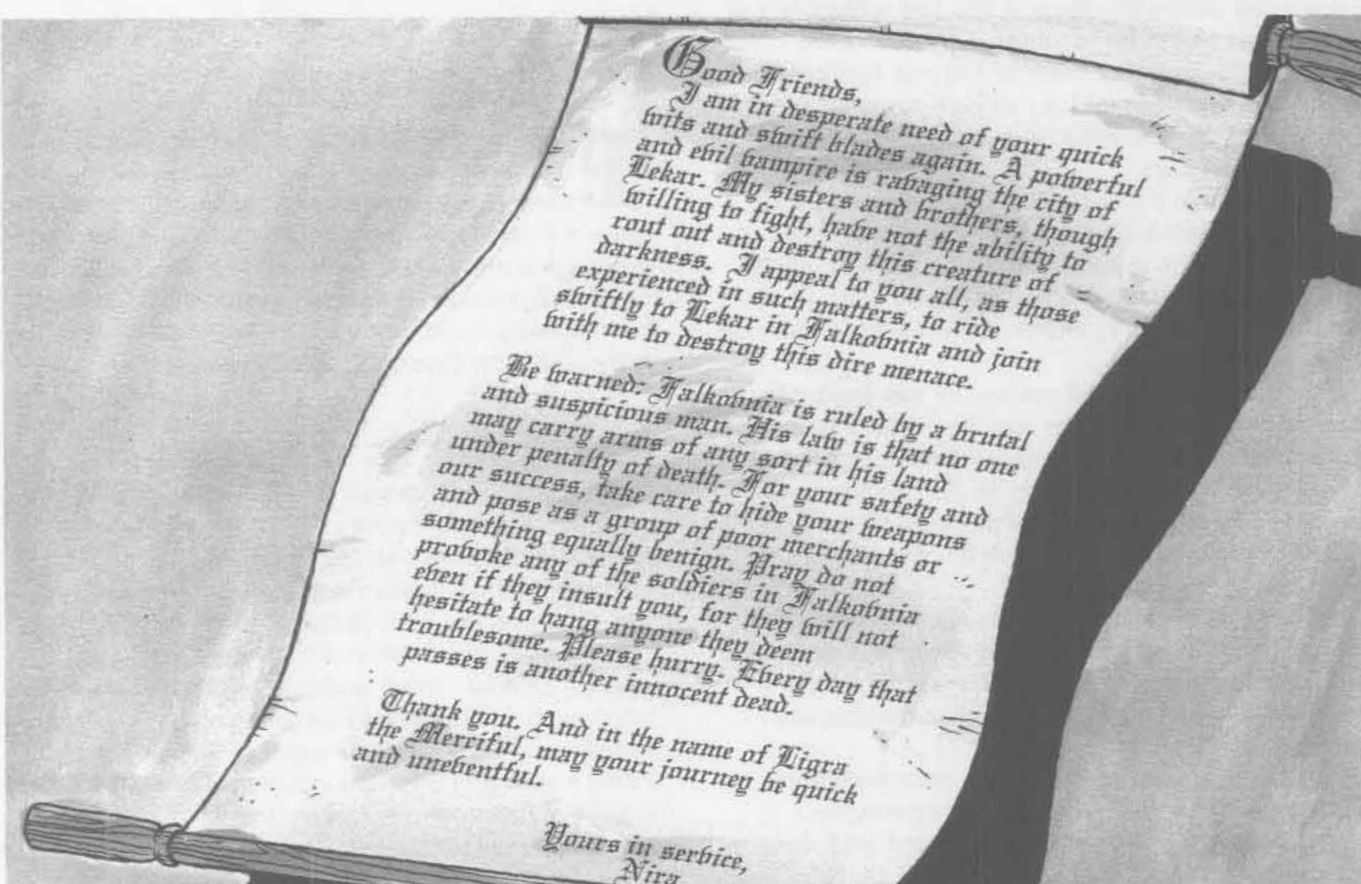
Meanwhile, in light of Drakov's inability to locate the vampire, the vampyres have determined to destroy their enemy themselves. Nira, now head of the clan, suggested using an adventuring party to lure the powerful vampire into an ambush in their lair (since only on their own turf, in their full numbers, can they hope to defeat a true vampire). She reasons that Jander is too cautious to attack on his own, but might make the attempt with the help of a strong adventuring party. Nira has written a message to the party she fought with in *To Conquer Fear* (page 60).

Nira expects the vampire to approach the party, seeing them as useful adjuncts to his attack. Using her connection to the group, Nira plans to lead the vampire and the humans into a huge ambush that she is certain can kill them all. She has promised her kin that if they vanquish the vampire, then they may devour the humans as their reward.

The Adventure Begins

Regardless of their current location, the heroes receive a message from Nira, the cleric who fought beside them in the adventure with the young Vistana vampire. The note urgently requests their aid. She asks them to travel to her sect's temple located in Lekar in Falkovnia.

Soon after the heroes enter Falkovnia, they should



Good Friends,
I am in desperate need of your quick wits and swift blades again. A powerful and evil vampire is ravaging the city of Lekar. My sisters and brothers, though willing to fight, have not the ability to rout out and destroy this creature of darkness. I appeal to you all, as those experienced in such matters, to ride swiftly to Lekar in Falkovnia and join with me to destroy this dire menace.

Be warned: Falkovnia is ruled by a brutal and suspicious man. His law is that no one may carry arms of any sort in his land under penalty of death. For your safety and our success, take care to hide your weapons and pose as a group of poor merchants or something equally benign. Pray do not provoke any of the soldiers in Falkovnia even if they insult you, for they will not hesitate to hang anyone they deem troublesome. Please hurry. Every day that passes is another innocent dead.

Thank you. And in the name of Ligra the Merciful, may your journey be quick and uneventful.

Yours in service,
Nira

encounter a squad of Drakov's grim-faced, heavily armed border patrols. The fighters are armed with wooden pikes and silver-edged weapons. Each one wears a garland of garlic over his armor.

If the heroes are disguised as Nira suggested, the soldiers pass them by without stopping them or even noticing them; continue with *Reunion*.

Any displayed weapons or acts of insolence provoke an immediate attack from the soldiers. You should stress that the soldiers are heavily armed and that they outnumber the party significantly.

Soldiers, human male (35): AC 4; MV 10; hp 12 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ Average (6'); ML Steady (12); Int Very (13); AL LE; XP 15 each.

In the event that the heroes lose this fight, the soldiers strip the heroes of their arms and carefully place a bulb of pungent garlic around each hero's neck. Next, the soldiers bind, gag, and blindfold them, then force-march them to the walled city of Lekar for a public staking.

Jander can intervene and rescue the heroes by using his charm to influence the tribunal into freeing them. If this happens, the heroes remain under constant surveillance by Drakov's soldiers and should have a difficult time leaving town.

Reunion

When they venture into the city, the heroes discover that most of Lekar is slums. Rundown buildings sigh on every side. Refuse, mud, and dung paint the scene with poverty. Patrols of soldiers are more common in the streets than civilians. The heroes continue to the address on Nira's message.

When they arrive, Nira quickly ushers the heroes inside. She appears unusually tense.

> "I am so glad you made it. Drakov's soldiers have grown fanatical in their search for the vampire, grabbing people and randomly staking them in the town square. I feared for you. But now you are here, and we have much to do."

She motions the heroes to sit at the table and offers them some ale. The sanctuary looks remarkably like an old tavern. Shrugging, Nira explains this was the best her small sect could afford. Without further delay, Nira tells the heroes that she has narrowed her search to the poorest section of town, where the beggars, thieves, and lunatics live. She feels certain the vampire hides among them, but since she is well-known as an agent of mercy and kindness, Nira cannot search there herself.

Nira hands the party a number of tightly bound packages, explaining that they contain stakes, holy water, and garlic. She warns the heroes not to open the packages until they confront the vampire.

In the unlikely event that the adventurers are so suspicious or rude that they tear open the bundles immediately, they find instead of stakes and garlic, that the packages contain only small rocks and animal bones. Nira acts shocked, apologizing and providing the real equipment.

Nira, vampyre: AC 4; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA Charming bite, –1 penalty to saving throw for each 2 points of damage; SZ Medium (5', 8" tall); ML Steady 12; AL CE; XP 3,000.
S 12, D 18, C 10, I 16, W 15, Ch 17.

Meeting Jander

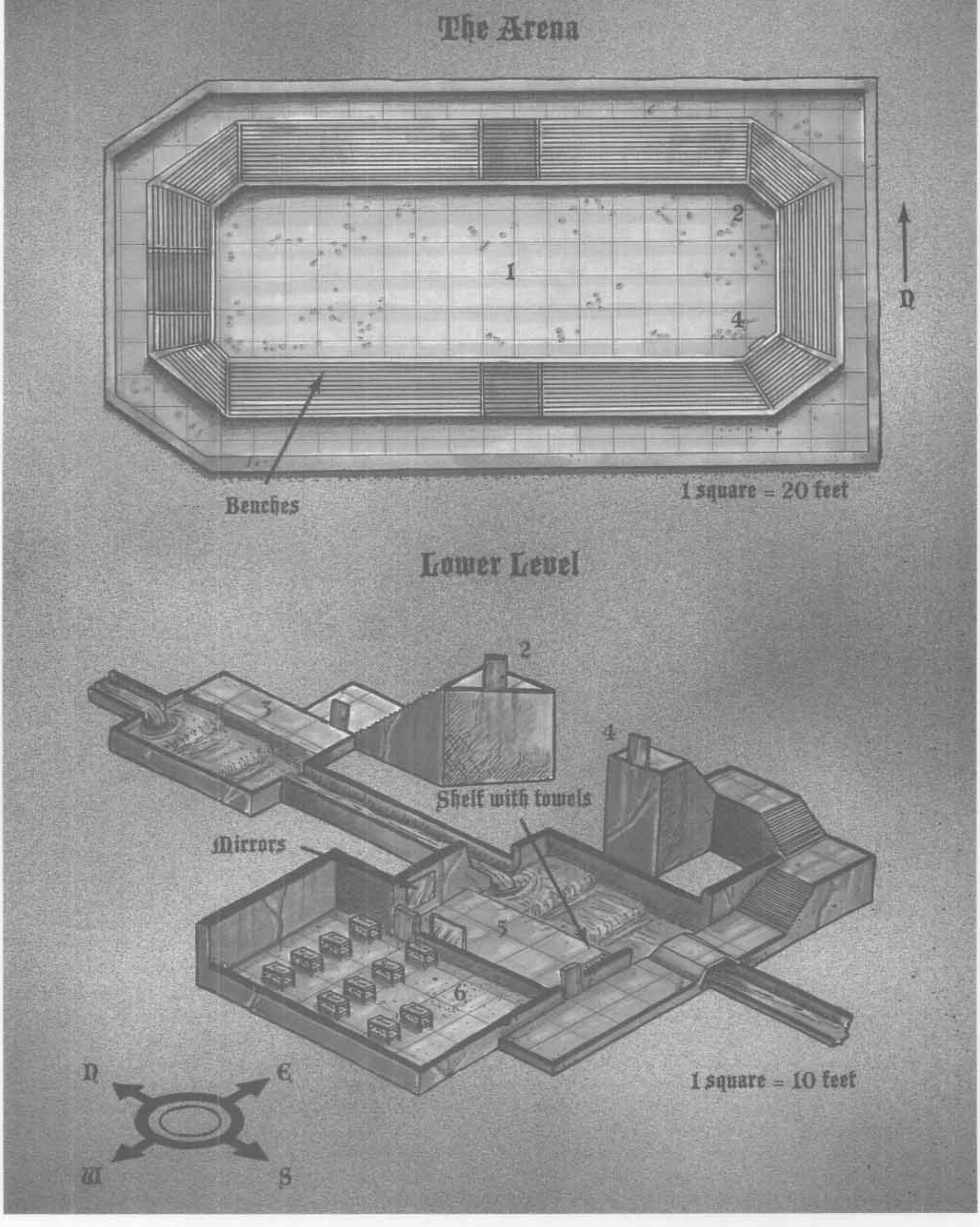
Nira urges the heroes to start searching immediately, reminding them that every day they delay, another innocent person dies. She instructs them to send for her if they discover the vampire's lair.

The heroes head south to the slums. The buildings are jammed together, and the streets are filled with beggars and the sick. After wandering around for a bit, they meet an unusual beggar:

> A slender figure in a tattered brown robe and deep cowl comes forward with his gloved right hand extended. His left arm hangs uselessly at his side.
> He says in a low voice, "I know your mission, and it is a mission that I have pursued for many years now. Alas, I cannot take them alone, but with your help, we might prevail. I think I know where the vampyres are hiding."

The beggar is Jander in disguise, but he introduces himself as "Rathandal." He takes the heroes aside in an alleyway, revealing his elvish nature. He explains that he must conceal himself, since Drakov considers all demihumans state property and arena fodder. He continues that he is a hunter, determined to destroy the vampiric menace in this city. He has located their main stronghold, but does not believe he can destroy them on his own. Elves are not trusted in this suspicious land, so he cannot enlist local help.

The heroes may wonder how this strange elf discovered their mission, and Rathandal merely replies, "Your muscles make poor work of that merchant garb. Your every movement betrays your trade as adventurers. Only such a threat as the vampyres would cause hearty heroes to tarry in this desolate city."


The Arena
1
2
4
N
Benches
1 square = 20 feet
Lower Level
2
3
4
Shelf with towels
Mirrors
5
6
N
E
W
S
1 square = 10 feet

Rathandal (Jander) says that the "vampires' lair" lies in the lower level of a dilapidated arena, which was once the site of gladiatorial contests, jousts, and mass executions. He offers to take the heroes there.

While around Rathandal, observant adventurers might notice that he seems to stick to the darkest of alleyways and avoids well-lit places (since, as a vampire, he casts no shadow). He also moves very quietly.

If the heroes mention Nira, the elf gladly accepts her help, though he confesses not to have heard of Ligra the Merciful. He suggests they meet at the arena in one hour.

If at any time after they leave her presence the heroes disobey Nira and open the packages, they find that instead of stakes and garlic, the bundles are filled with small rocks and animal bones.

The Vampyre Lair

If Nira is with the heroes as they enter the arena, she offers to guard the rear.

1. Arena Area: Unlike most buildings in Lekar, the indoor arena is stone. Torches illuminate the only entrance. The heavy double doors are unlocked. Grandstand seats encircle a heavily stained sandy area. Stairs cut through the stands to the east, north, and south. Light splashes weakly across the floor, leaving the seating area entirely in shadow.

To the southeast lies a closed, iron door etched with several types of wards against undead. Copied from Vistani symbols, these wards are so powerful that not even Jander can bypass them. The heroes should recognize them for what they are; Rathandal (Jander) feigns ignorance, encouraging a thief or wizard to use his skills to open the door. If Nira is with the party, she dispels the wards.

2. Northeast Door: The northeast door opens to a short corridor going down to another door. A glistening film of condensation covers the walls. The floor is slick and requires care when crossing.

The door at the end of corridor stand slightly ajar. The sound of lapping water comes from somewhere nearby.

3. Bathing Room: Behind the far door is a room with terraced pools that were used by contestants to wash themselves after the events. Mist curls over the troughs as hot water from an underground spring cascades into the tiered pools, then out an opening to the south.

4. Southeast Door Corridor: Hot, steaming water from another bathing room (Area 5) runs under a small stone bridge. The water is slightly discolored from blood.

Jander waits until the party has cleared out of the corridor before he *shapechanges* into a bat and flies over the bridge to avoid the running water.

5. Bathing Room: The vampyres use this place to drain their victims in the comfort of a warm bath.



As the heroes enter, read or paraphrase the following:

> Dim torches cast weak, wavering shadows across this steaming bathing area. Water gurgles noisily. In this heavy mist, you see three couples in the upper pools. At first glance, they appear to be engaging in romantic trysts, but then one man releases his companion, and she slips into the water. He licks his bloodstained lips with a contented sigh, as she begins to float toward the pool's runoff. You notice blood flowing down the backs of the "lovers," coloring the water and running swiftly into the lower pools.

This scene calls for a horror check from the heroes. Adventurers with some knowledge of vampires should be particularly shocked to see the creatures standing in running water, something that usually destroys these monsters.

Heroes who pass the horror check are entitled to one round of surprise attacks. The vampyres fiercely counterattack, with reinforcements from Area 6 coming to their aid at the end of the second round. The prisoners who are charmed by the venomous bite of the vampyres plead pitifully with the heroes to stop their fighting. Rathandal stays away from the pools, but engages the vampyres emerging from Area 6.

If Nira was with the heroes, she slips away during this scene to prepare the final ambush.

Vampyres (3): AC 4; MV 12; hp 40 each; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA Charming bite; SZ Medium (6' tall); ML Steady (12); Int Average (13); AL CE; XP 3,000 each.

Vampyres (6 from Area 6): Same statistics as the others except 43 hp each.

6. The Room of the Damned: Beyond the secret door is a large room filled with 10 two-tiered bunk bed frames. Chained to each one is a tired, battered person, each with ugly, bruised fang marks on the neck, arms, and torso. Under the *charm* of the vampyres' saliva, they beg the heroes to let them stay. The heroes should make horror checks as soon as they enter.

The locks on the chains are all well made (–5% to open locks rolls), and the keys are kept under a loose stone in a corner of the room. Without the keys, it takes 30 successful lock-picking rolls or bend bars/lift gates rolls to free the captives. Once freed, the captives refuse to move. The heroes must use some kind of persuasion to counteract the vampyres' *charm.*

As the heroes help the prisoners, blood lust overcomes Jander. While pretending to search a dead vampyre in Area 4, he actually feeds on the body's still-warm blood.

The Final Ambush

In a short time, the main party of vampyres arrives with Nira. They rush the heroes and Jander. Nira and two others grab Jander, exposing his face and freshly bloodied fangs.

> "We've got you now, vampire!" laughs Nira hysterically, baring her own fangs. She and the other vampyres plunge Jander into a pool, hoping to destroy him by immersion. Jander's eyes glow as he sinks his fangs into Nira's arm. She screams hideously, yelling, "Leave the humans for now, you can feed from them later. Help me kill the vampire!"

The vampyres momentarily ignore the party, instead mobbing Jander.

Vampyres (10): AC 4; MV 12; HD 8+3; hp 46, 40×6; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA *Charming bite*; SZ Medium (6' tall); ML Steady (12); Int Average (13); AL CE; XP 3,000 each.

Probably very confused at this point, the heroes should now realize that both their allies are monsters. The "unmasking" of both Nira and Jander merits a horror check from all of the heroes.

The heroes must choose either to retrieve Jander (who is quite outnumbered), or allow the "other vampires" to slay him. Also point out there are a number of helpless victims they could save.

If the heroes rescue Jander, the vampire tells his story, emphasizing that the only reason he continues his undead existence is to rid the world of such horrors as the vampyres and himself.

If the heroes choose not to rescue him, Jander—who can survive three hours in running water if need be—assumes gaseous form after three rounds of immersion, and escapes, leaving the heroes to fight the vampyres alone.

Recurrence

The heroes might encounter Jander in another domain, hunting and destroying evil creatures. Depending on how the heroes reacted to Jander in this scenario, Jander may appear as either a friend or foe.

As mentioned above, one of Jander's goals is to see Strahd destroyed. If you are itching to send the heroes through the *House of Strahd* adventure, you might use Jander to construct a motivation for them to go there.

Our new patient, Ishmael,
is a peculiar case,
bound between the realms
of fairy tale and nightmare.
He is a seaman from the Martha's Pride,
out of Martira Bay. He claims his ship was
attacked by a dragonheaded vessel most
commonly described in children's tales.
In gruesome detail, he pictures the ship
crewed by leering officers with rotted flesh.
The complexity of his delusion is both
impressive and daunting, and I am not sure
which fragment to tackle first.

—Dr. Zuvich,
Asylum of Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu

Audun Beck

Biography

Audun Beck, captain of the dragonship *Illsong*, is of the cruel, Viking-like Kosti tribe, who live in wintry fjords and prey upon the helpless folk of sunnier climates. Battle, seamanship, and looting are the three most important aspects of Kosti life.



Appearance

Audun Beck is a hard-fighting, steel-tempered raider. His muscular, 6 foot, 3 inch frame is clad in leather and furs, and he sports flowing white hair, bright green eyes, a thick moustache, and a coarse, short beard. Only the pale greenish tint to his wrinkled skin contradicts the first impression of fitness.

Audun carries an oblong shield decorated with dragons, lightning bolts, and a large serpent device; a long sword hangs at his side. Strands of dark seaweed drape his clothing, arms, shield, and helm.

Audun Beck

Sea Vampire,Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	0	Str	18/00
Movement	12, Sw 18	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	10+2	Con	16
Hit Points	62	Int	17
THAC0	11	Wis	13
No. of Attacks	2/1	Cha	16
Morale	19	XP	6,000

Magic Resistance 10%

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 9 (sword); 4+1(tentacle)

Special Attacks (octopus form only): Constitution drain (2 points per round), system shock check required each round by victims, telepathic *charm aura* against previously drained victims, *shapechange* into octopus once per day.

Special Defenses: +2 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round, unaffected by immersion in running water, turned as ghost, immune to garlic and mirrors.

Special Weaknesses: Unable to charm while in octopus form, each vial of holy water inflicts 2d6+2 points of damage.

Giant octopus form: AC 7; MV 3, Sw 12; THAC0 13; #AT 6; Dmg See text; SZ Large (10').

Background

While raiding a wizard's tower, Captain Audun Beck found a helm with a glowing green gemstone. Audun kept the prize, not realizing the helm's cursed luckstone still carried one wish.

As it left the tower, the *Illsong* fell prey to a pod of giant octopi. While some creatures entangled the great oars, a suckered limb as broad as two warriors' thighs looped across the dragonship's gunwales. When the monster's mouth finally heaved into view, the Kosti saw this octopus had no beak, but instead the pointed fangs of a vampire!

The *Illsong* swamped under the incredible weight, and as the powerful tentacles dragged him underwater, Audun felt his strength drain from his body. Unable at the last even to struggle, he cursed his god. Audun wished furiously that he and his crew could live on to fight another day. His helm's gem flickered and then became dull.

Suddenly the captain's strength surged back, and he could breathe normally underwater! Better still, the octopi were gone. In the dim depths, he found his crew was likewise favored. Audun urged his men to row for the surface. But as they rose and the light grew, all could see the officers were now jolly rogers and the crewmen sea zombies. Captain Beck discovered he had a fearsome craving for salt.

The changed Kosti began a mad campaign of plunder.

In his octopus form, Audun sucked the body salts of his victims through his tentacles. Obsessed with finding a release from this curse, Audun sailed to the Kosti home fjords to seek advice. The holy man could not cure him, and the enraged captain laid waste to his own village. As the black smoke swirled up, the crew of the *Illsong* was overcome with vertigo.

They came to consciousness in the Sea of Sorrows. For 250 years, they have emerged on the sea's surface nightly, looking for prey. Audun feeds his vampiric hunger by attacking the first ship he comes across. Alternatively, after a fortnight or so of fruitless sailing, Audun sends his men to make a Kosti-style raid on a seaside village.

During the raid, the captain swims in his octopus form while the men loot local establishments and kidnap some victims. When the crew has more loot on board the *Illsong* than they can comfortably hold, they stash it in their lair at the bottom of the sea.

Audun sails on the Sea of Sorrows (unless you want to use a different body of water), and raids any of the coastal villages that border it. During the day, the *Illsong* rests on the sea bottom, far from the harmful rays of the sun. As the sun sets, the dragonship rises to the surface, looking for prey. Captain Beck has no contact with the domain lord.

Personality

Audun is a gloomy soul trapped into what he considers a dishonorable situation. In his mind, his vampirism and his ship's arrival in these strange waters are inextricably linked to the same curse. In fact, his vampirism is a result of his encounter with the vampiric octopus, and the curse (which merely transformed his crew) was created by the booby-trapped helm.

Combat

When the *Illsong* spots a potential victim—a ship foolish enough to sail at night—Audun assumes his octopus form and swims underwater toward his prey (his bodily possessions become merged into his new form). When he reaches the victim ship, he wraps his tentacles around the rudder, locking the ship onto a tack that brings the *Illsong* alongside. The *Illsong* attacks only one ship each night.

As the victim crew fights the sea zombies and their jolly roger officers, Audun uses his tentacles to climb onto the ship and then attack with surprise from behind. If no hero specifically watches the rear, the party has a –5 penalty to their surprise rolls.

While he anchors two tentacles to any available support, Audun wraps the other six around victims and starts draining them.

Victims in a tentacle's grasp lose two points of Constitution per round and must make a system shock roll as vital salts drain from their bodies. Failure indicates that the victim passes out and future draining is automatic. Breaking free requires a minimum of 15 Strength points and a successful bend bars roll. A successful *knock* spell frees all people caught in the creature's tentacles. Victims who lose all their Constitution points die and arise in six hours as sea zombies under the control of Captain Beck. The tentacle suckers leave deep, circular bruises wider than a coin.

The Rewards of Courage

This adventure is for four to six characters of levels 5–9 (about 37 levels). It is primarily a set battle and can be fit into a campaign several different ways. If the heroes board a ship along the coast of the Sea of Sorrows, you can send Audun Beck and the *Illsong* in their wake. If the heroes are merely visiting the coast, Audun and his crew raid the village in which they are staying.

The Adventure Begins

Wandering through the town, the heroes notice a sandwich board bearing an elaborately painted red palm and the legend, "Fortunes for the Sea Foretold." If the heroes approach, a grinning Vistana boy confirms that his aged grandmother, Madam Fayina, tells fortunes.

For the best atmosphere, role-play Madam Fayina one on one with each hero who wants a reading. Trifling with her grandson or eavesdropping on another's fortune are rude behaviors that Madam Fayina counters by refusing the offending character. If the adventurer persists, she might curse him. Review *Chapter VI: Curses* in *Realm of Terror* of the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set to devise appropriate curses.

> The densely wrinkled Vistana seer supports herself on a black cane with a silver ram's head handle. Her once-bright red dress is now adorned nearly equally with yellow embroidered flowers and stains. Madam Fayina only has a few teeth left in her mouth, and the strong aroma of garlic wafts around her. A glowing crystal ball stands in the center of her round, shawl-draped table.

Madam Fayina leaves her customer the opportunity to pay (but does not suggest it). If a hero asks how



much her reading costs, she says in a creaking, high-pitched voice, "Pay what you think it is worth. I have no set prices."

Next, the Vistana clutches both hands on the crystal ball. After a moment, she pronounces the adventurer's fortune. See the fortune-telling table below for her readings. Heroes who tip or pay afterward get no bonuses.

Fortune Telling Table

Roll 1d6, according to what the hero paid.

0–5 cp	
1	Fair winds journey with you.
2	Beware the cook.
3	A fair-haired crew member seeks your hand.
4	Efil hides in the ship's masthead.
5	The rats will be your friends.
6	Eat no fruit on this voyage.
6–25 cp	
1	Fear not peril from the sky, but beware that which swims the sea.
2	He falls first who leaves his back unguarded.
3	Those who laugh harshly seek your death.
4	Trust not the obvious in a monster.
5	The touch of a crewman may kill slowly.
6	The touch of a monster kills quickly.
26+ cp	
1	Honor can cut closer than the sharpest blade.
2	Resurrection spells death for laughter.
3	While great enemies appear at your bow, your worst nightmare arrives at your back.
4	Even rotted flesh can feel a chill.
5	Fear the arms of the beakless monster.
6	Vanquish the dragon with flame.

Once the heroes have taken their fortunes, they can board their ship (or continue along the village). If the adventurers look back, Madam Fayina, her tent, and her grandson have vanished.

How the adventure unfolds depends on whether the heroes are at sea—and how long they intend to remain there—or on shore. If they are at sea, head to *Ghost Ship Ahoy!*, but on shore, use the *Raiders!* encounter.

Raiders!

If the heroes remain on shore, they continue about their business until supper time, or full dark. Suddenly, their peace is interrupted by a man who rushes into the tavern yelling "Raiders! Karolyi's barn is burning!"

If the adventurers press for details, he says his brother's farm lies a few short blocks east, and begs them to hurry. If they just race out the door, the light of the leaping flames leads them to the action.

A soft green luminescence reveals a dragonship pulling away from shore. Some of the crew are splashing into the surf carrying loot, while others still battle the townsfolk. The heroes can join the fight on shore. If they opt to find a boat immediately, the townsfolk eventually kill or drive off these creatures.

Sea zombies (6): AC 7; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 5; hp 26 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA Decay causes anyone viewing or within 20 feet to successfully save vs. poison or add –1 penalty to attack roll and +1 penalty to AC for 2d4 rounds, each hit has 10% chance of causing severe disease; SD Immune to mind-affecting spells, take only half damage from fire or fire magic, cannot be turned; SW Take double damage from lightning, electrical, and cold-based attacks; SZ Medium (6'); Int Low (5); AL CE; ML Fearless (20); XP 420 each.

Krystof, the brother who ran to the tavern, offers his boat for pursuit of the dragonship. If any of the adventurers has the sailing proficiency, they can help Krystof sail, otherwise, he handles the boat himself. Under sail, they can make as good or better time than the sea zombies (if the heroes need to catch up because they fought the victims on shore). When they come close to the *Illsong*, Captain Beck, in octopus form, latches onto their vessel. Continue the confrontation with the ships-meet-at-sea section, *Ghost Ship Ahoy!*, adjusting the text as needed.

Ghost Ship Ahoy!

On the first evening of the voyage, the *Illsong* rises from the depths of the Sea of Sorrows and starts its pursuit. Read the following to whichever characters are on deck:

> A cry from the watch goes up, and a longship with a dragon's head emerges as if from nowhere about 300 feet off the starboard side. The ship glows, quite visible, with a strange, green luminescence. All on deck can hear the relentless strokes of the oars in the dark waters. The officer on watch on your ship springs into action, and soon all crewmen are adjusting the sails to flee this phantom ship. In a few minutes, the glowing pursuer begins to lose ground.

The heroes have 10 rounds to prepare themselves. The *Illsong* itself has certain protections for its crew members: Spells that are 3rd level or higher inflict only half damage, while those below 3rd level have no effect at all.

After five rounds, a cry of distress from the helm indicates trouble. Though helmsman and captain tug at the wheel, the rudder does not budge. An observer looking aft might spot the giant octopus, Audun, snarled in the rudder.

In another five rounds, the ship has lost all forward momentum, while the *Illsong* reaches boarding distance. Weapons in mouths, the sea zombies dive overboard, swim the short gap, and climb the ship's sides. The jolly rogers guffaw gratingly as they swing over from the *Illsong*'s rigging.

Sea zombies (20): AC 7; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 5; hp 26 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA Decay causes anyone viewing or within 20 feet to successfully save vs. poison or add –1 penalty to attack roll and +1 penalty to AC for 2d4 rounds, each hit has 10% chance of causing severe disease; SD Immune to mind-affecting spells, take only half damage from fire or fire magic, cannot be turned; SW Take double damage from lightning, electrical, and cold-based attacks; if jolly roger officers are turned, sea zombies automatically become turned; SZ Medium (6'); Int Low (5); AL CE; ML Fearless (20); XP 420 each.

Jolly rogers (2): AC 4; MV 9; Sw 12; HD 6+2; hp 35, 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA Visage or laughter requires save vs. spell to avoid *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter* for 1d4 rounds; laughing victims touched by jolly rogers must save vs. death magic (+3 bonus) or be slain; SD Immune to mind-affecting spells, take only half damage from fire or fire magic; unaffected by cold or water-based spells, hit only by +1 or better weapons; SW *Raise dead* or *resurrection* cast on jolly roger destroys it if it fails save vs. spell with –2 penalty; SZ Medium (6'); ML Fearless (20); AL CE; XP 2,000 each.

On the third round of battle, Audun attacks from the rear in octopus form. You might choose to have Audun attack NPCs first. Those adventurers who were forewarned by Madam Fayina or anticipated an attack from the rear are not subject to surprise penalties.

Any hero who makes a singularly brave offensive maneuver causes the sea vampire to finish the fight in Kosti warrior (human) form. This is a clue to Audun's feelings about dishonor. In subsequent encounters, if the heroes seem oblivious to the significance of the change, Audun can comment on the bravery of his opponent. Praise like, "Well met at last! I see someone on this wide ocean has honor!" should give even clueless adventurers food for thought. When he is reduced below five hit points, Audun jumps or slides overboard to escape (he recovers his full hit points in 24 hours).

If the heroes manage to defeat or temporarily dislodge the crew from the *Illsong*, the dragonship begins to settle into the waves. Quick-thinking or greedy party members might search it for treasure as it's going down. What they find depends on your campaign, and can range from villagers' precious keepsakes to gems and gold. The best treasures, of course, lie on the sea bed where Captain Beck and his crew lair during the day. If the heroes undertake an underwater salvage expedition, they have to brave Audun's octopus form in its native element (he lairs deep enough that daylight does not penetrate), as well as any other regular undersea threats.

Recurrence

Most likely, the party can defeat these raiders temporarily. If they vanquish the crew, Audun raises other dead to replace them. While the luckstone in Audun's helm has no more cursed wishes to grant, it retains enough magical essence to regenerate damage done to the *Illsong*. However, it cannot repair damage caused to the dragonship by fire-based attacks.

Over several encounters (either in subsequent days, or if the adventurers' sailing voyages are short, spread through a long campaign), the party can gather enough clues to the location of the vampire's lair and Audun and the crew's weaknesses to puzzle out a unique way to defeat Beck. Some possibilities include smashing the green jewel in the helm he still wears, challenging him to single combat, staking him with a piece of his own boat, or exhuming the *Illsong* from the seabed and torching it in a proper Kosti funeral.

The day I turned, the land
wept for my beauty,
as you weep now for your life, cur.
Cry not for your insignificant future—
you never had one without me.
You face a far greater torment than
death—the torment of never being able
to worship me again. That
is your punishment for disobeying me. . . .
Tear him to shreds.

—Lyssa von Zarovich

Lyssa von Zarovich

Lyssa von Zarovich



Biography

Lyssa von Zarovich has been raised to despise Count Strahd, and she and her vampiric relatives often concoct plots to overthrow the master of Barovia. Although she takes great pains to conceal her plotting, Count Strahd's spy network is so strong that he is easily able to discover and block her attempts. Presently, Strahd allows Lyssa to continue her intrigues, since they often prove amusing.

Appearance

Lyssa von Zarovich is a beautiful vampiress with softly flowing brown hair, hazel eyes, and an unforgettably lovely face. She is five feet tall and trim, but not overly so. Her bearing is aristocratic. Lyssa always dresses fashionably and expensively, favoring lavish jewelry and furs. She never appears in public without an entire entourage of retainers.

Lyssa von Zarovich

Vampiress of Barovia, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	–3	Str	19
Movement	18, Fl 18	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	11+1	Con	18
Hit Points	85	Int	18
THAC0	10	Wis	18
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	18
Morale	18	XP	13,000

Magic Resistance 15%
Damage/Attack: 1d4+6
Special Attacks: *Charm* (–3 penalty to victim's saving throw), drains five levels per hit.
Special Defenses: +2 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 4 hp per round, immune to garlic and mirrors, turned as a lich.

Background

The vampiress is the daughter of Anna and Tod von Zarovich and granddaughter of Sturm von Zarovich, who was one of the few to escape Strahd's wrath on the day that he murdered his brother Sergei and lost his beloved Tatyana.

Of her branch of the family, Lyssa is the most capable. She is the only one who realizes that age is the secret to a vampire's power. To this end, she enticed the ghost of a former lover to show his affections to her. As the ghost became frustrated (since its incorporeal form would not allow physical contact), it attacked her repeatedly, aging her. Once Lyssa had attained an age and power that satisfied her, she destroyed the ghost.

Lyssa's most recent plot against Strahd involved a conspiracy with the illithids of Bluetspur to create vampiric mind flayers. She had an agreement that if she succeeded in creating such monstrosities, the illithids would invade Barovia and destroy Strahd. However, the intervention of a heroic band of adventurers thwarted this attempt (in the adventure *Thoughts of Darkness*, 9364).

Lyssa and her minions live in the small city of Zeidenberg. They believe that they are safe from Count Strahd here, because Zeidenberg lies in the land of Gundarak. Unbeknownst to Lyssa and her allies, Barovia absorbed their part of Gundarak before the Grand Conjunction, making them all subject to Strahd's direct influence.

Personality

Behind her physical beauty, Lyssa is a scheming vampiress, hungry for power. She is very proud, vain,

and cunning. While among the human population, she projects the image of the perfect aristocratic lady—witty, charming, and ever so slightly bored.

With her minions, Lyssa acts harsh and condescending. She values them only so far as their service furthers her aims.

Combat

Lyssa dislikes direct combat, despite her vampiric abilities—she would rather trick others into fighting for her. However, Lyssa can prove a devastating opponent. Her favorite strategy is to *assume gaseous form* and attempt to surprise her opponents while they battle her minions.

The Turning Day

This adventure is for four to six characters levels 4–8 (about 35 levels total). Although it is written as if it occurs in Zeidenberg, the adventure can take place in any RAVENLOFT domain. To use a different location, substitute a devoted minion for Strahd himself in the final scenes. (See *The Turning Day Ritual.*)

Background

The adventure revolves around a plot of Count Strahd's to teach his conniving niece Lyssa a lesson in respect. Though the heroes have little chance to derail Strahd's machinations, they can rescue an important victim, and they get the chance to evaluate a potentially dangerous future foe, Lyssa.

To accomplish his lesson, the Count paid the madman Emil Bollenbach (detailed in *Chilling Tales*, 9495) to create a unique golem, whose veins flow with a special blood plasma made with several arcane potions (provided by Strahd). A vampire who feeds from this golem will fall into an irresistible slumber and sleep for two weeks. Every day afterwards for decades, the vampire will slowly regain the night—at first being able to stay awake for only an hour at a time.

Strahd intends to use the golem to weaken Lyssa severely, which should send a powerful message to the rest of her branch of the family. In fact, he has allowed Lyssa herself to determine the time and place for her undoing.

To satisfy her vanity and egotism, Lyssa has established her Turning Day (the day Lyssa died and awoke cursed with vampirism) as a major celebration rite each decade. She uses the occasion to flaunt her power by choosing a particularly important person to turn into her personal slave. She spends years researching the best and brightest of each domain, always on the watch for a person who is both physically ideal and politically pivotal.

This Turning Day, Lyssa has chosen Thomas Sergeiovich Zhavov, son of Lord Sergei Zhavov who rules part of this domain. Lyssa arrived in town six months ago. Her affections for Thomas have been discreet, but many people have begun whispering of their possible union. Her true nature is quite unknown. She is considered little more than a lovely potential match for the young lord. Lyssa used her closeness to Thomas to determine the best time to kidnap him for her ritual.

What Lyssa did not count on was that Strahd, through a spy among her minions, learned of her plans. He arranged for his minion to kidnap Thomas and replace him with the golem prior to her attack. Strahd's agent has hidden the real Thomas in a cave near the glade in which Lyssa will conduct her Turning Day rite.

The golem is an exact replica of Thomas Zhavov, including even the scars he acquired during his youth. The fake Tom does not know that he is a flesh golem and he bears no scars or stitch marks that might reveal his nature, except for a thin scar line at the nape of his neck, concealed under his hair. Despite all precautions, Bollenbach's masterpiece does have one flaw—two weeks ago, Thomas was practicing archery when his bowstring snapped, lacerating his forearm nastily. This injury is so new that it was not included in Bollenbach's information.

Lyssa's kidnapping of Tom (unknown to her, the golem) went off perfectly. She arranged for some loyal mercenaries to hold Tom in their camp until the day prior to her Turning Day, and then to bring Tom into town (via a covered cart, since any native would instantly recognize him) where she would prepare him for the rite. The rite itself will take place in a glade deep in the forest, on the site of a defiled druidic circle.

The Adventure Begins

As the heroes enter the outskirts of a populated area of the domain, they notice some odd sights—farmers listlessly tending their fields; women slowly trudging to market, not even pausing as vegetables occasionally fall in the road. No one even glances at the party.

When they reach the first house, the heroes see three women weeping on the steps of the porch. The women, obviously three generations of the same fam-

ily, pay no attention to the heroes' approach. If a hero tries to talk to them, the elderly crone grabs the hero by the arm and wails, "Why did they take him? He was the light of this land, oh the poor, lost Master Thomas!"

If the adventurers ask more, the middle-aged one glares at them and then bitterly explains that Master Thomas, the beloved nephew (or son or brother) of the lord of this area disappeared two days ago, after his hunting party was brutally attacked and killed. Only the bugler escaped. He babbled insanely about giant wolves and pale demons. He died shortly afterwards, screaming. Lord Zhavov has sent men all over the countryside searching for Thomas, but to no avail.

From other people—all of whom act grief-stricken and despondent—the heroes can learn about Thomas. The people boast that, though only in his late teens, Thomas can best any man in archery and riding, as well as charm any woman who sees his handsome face. They describe him as a rather tall, sandy-haired youth, with honest blue eyes and an easy grin. The villagers say that they expect young Thomas, a sharp-witted boy, to figure prominently in the realm someday under the guidance of his uncle.

As the heroes continue to the nearest town, the trees grow thicker, blocking out the sunlight. The air seems oddly still, as if something or someone had chased off all the wildlife. If the heroes are riding, the horses start to act nervous.

> As you round a bend in the road, the air has grown foul. A single outstretched hand, clutching a broken sword, stretches across the path. Nearly a dozen human mercenaries lie in the road. Shreds of leather or chain armor do little to hide the fatal wounds. Scattered among them are the remains of a score of orange, goblin-like humanoids, bearing wounds caused by swords and crushing blows.
>
> On the right, an overturned cart leans against a stump. Nearby someone whistles. Seated on the far side of the vehicle is a handsome, blond fellow, who is staring out into space as his left hand strokes the dead horse's tail.

Altogether, the 10 dead humans were carrying a total of 44 gp and 98 sp. Their weapons are by and large ruined. One woman wears a silver necklace with an inset blue gem, worth 225 gp. The 25 dead goblyns have 3 gp and 28 sp among them.

The whistler states that his name is Tom and smiles absently. He does not know where he has come from or where he is heading. He says that he was riding in the back of the covered cart with the kind, quiet people when all at once the "ugly orange things" jumped out of the woods and started a "big fight." Tom remembers some of them attacking him, but he claims to have "slugged them and they stopped." He is not hurt in any visible way—not even a scratch.

After a few minutes of talking, Tom bolts upright and shouts the name "Lyssa." For a moment, he seems lucid and declares that he must go to her, then he lapses back into mild confusion. When questioned, all he can remember is that she is a beautiful as a star, fair as falling snow, and bright like fire. He doesn't know how to find her, although he thinks she might be in peril and that she needs him.

Tom, flesh golem: AC 9; MV 8; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SA Strength 19 for purposes of lifting, throwing, or breaking down doors; SD Hit only by magical or silver weapons, fire and cold inflict no damage, but slow for 2d6 rounds, electrical attack cures 1 hp of damage per Hit Die of attack, resistant to all other spells; SZ Medium (6' tall); ML Fearless (19); Int Low (7); AL NG; XP 2,000.

If the heroes are suspicious of Tom and try to leave him, Tom starts to cry like a small child and begs them to help him find Lyssa. Stress that if Tom is the missing nephew, such a powerful lord as Zhavov will undoubtedly offer a reward, perhaps allowing them to use his clerics for magical healing.

The heroes have two main options at this point—try to find Lyssa or take Tom back to his relatives. Either way, they should head into town, unless you want to create a random encounter. If a fight occurs, each hero has a 10% chance of noticing that no blow pierces Tom's skin and that he fights with a great deal of strength, delivering beefy wallops with his fists.

If the party arrives in town during the daytime, without disguising Tom in some way, the townspeople gather around Tom, cheering and welcoming him home, as the *Homecoming* section describes.

If instead they disguise him, and/or wait until nightfall to hide their passenger, they can either accidentally or purposefully run into Lyssa. *Step into My Parlor* details that meeting.

Homecoming

Everyone talks boisterously, buzzing with questions. Tom clings to the party, looking fearful. It is obvious that he recognizes no one. While some of the greeters are women, none have the kind of remarkable beauty that Lyssa's description evokes.

Shortly, a entourage of armed men arrives. They announce themselves as the escort for Master Thomas, and request (rather forcefully and imperiously) that everyone accompany them to the castle immediately.

The castle appears small, but its fortifications are daunting. Archers patrol the high, thin walls, dressed in heavy chain and thick coifs. Fires burn at each corner tower, day and night. The guards—alert and suspicious—never take their dark eyes off the party as they enter. Guards lead the heroes down a wide hall, under a series of sharp-toothed portcullises, to the main hall. A flurry of servants are hastily setting a long banquet table. Excitement and joy clearly shows on their faces as they steal glances at Tom.

An exceedingly tall man with a ruddy complexion and robust figure enters the room. Without delay, he crosses over to Tom and embraces him heartily. This man is Tom's relative. Lord Zhavov immediately starts interrogating Tom mercilessly. Zhavov gets more and more angry as Tom cowers, unable to answer his questions. Tom clearly does not trust Zhavov. FInally, the lord demands to know who the heroes are and what is wrong with Thomas.

Once the heroes explain all they know, the lord calms down. Tom stays silent for the rest of the interview, keeping the party between him and the lord. When asked about Lyssa, the lord gets a calculating gleam in his eye. He explains that Lady Lyssa von Zarovich is an aristocratic daughter of a very distinguished Barovian family and that she has been spending time in this realm. He describes her as a beautiful, refined young woman who be an asset to any household (obviously the lord hopes to make her a part of his through a marriage to Thomas). He tells you she is staying with her entourage in a set of private rooms in town.

If the heroes ask about a reward, the lord narrows his dark eyes and regards the adventurers critically for a few moments. If they are noticeably wounded, he directs a servant to bring some clerics to perform some minor healing only. After the healing, the lord motions the heroes to the now set table.

"You may join me for a meal as your reward. I can be a very generous man, let no one tell you otherwise. And while I am thankful you have returned Thomas to me, you have returned the man, but not the mind. Without his mind, Thomas might as well be dead in the forest. If you can cure him of this affliction, then I will handsomely reward you."

Zhavov awaits your reply. Real anguish shows in his hard eyes. "All I ask as that you bring back my Thomas to me."

If the heroes agree to help, the lord nods and thanks them. Platters of cold venison and pork, steaming bowls of soup and bread, and flagons of dark red wine are brought to the adventurers by silent and efficient servants. The lord eats with the heroes and answers their questions, though with a terse reserve. His dark eyes often fall on Thomas, who is attacking the food with gusto and little grace, seemingly oblivious to all else. At the end of the meal, the lord excuses himself and suggests that the heroes get to work without delay.

Talking to the servants of the household provides little information. They seem skittish and hostile to the newcomers. More than once they glance over their shoulders as if watched. The guards are surly—at best ignoring the heroes, at worst threatening them. There are no courtiers in the castle. It seems all social activity ceased when Thomas went missing.

If the adventurers try to go to Thomas's quarters in the castle, they encounter a plump, wrinkled old maid, who cries out and hugs Tom as soon she sees him. She is Olga, Thomas's old nurse.

Olga talks to the heroes, though her mind wanders quite a bit and her loyalty to Thomas taints everything she says. From her, the heroes learn that the lord is a widower who has never attempted to remarry. Olga raised Thomas and declares that she has taught him all he knows. She prattles on, even when not asked questions, and fawns over Thomas as if he were a child.

At one point, she examines Thomas's hand closely. She asks him where the scar went. When asked what she means, she babbles about a recent archery accident that gashed the young man's hand. She loses interest in the hand and reprimands him instead for slouching.

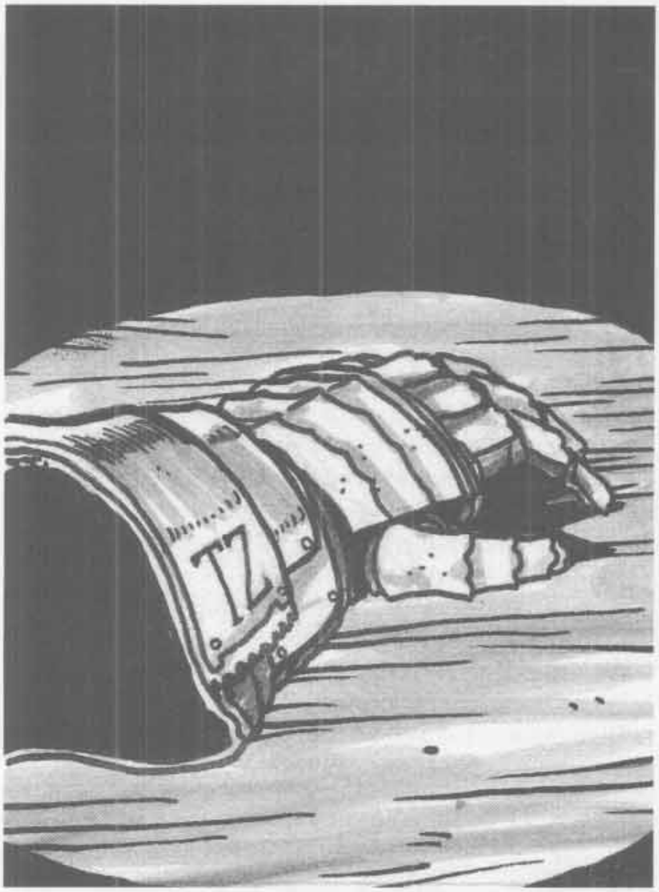
At this point, the heroes should be directed either to Lyssa's apartments, *Step into My Parlor*, or to the site where bugler said the hunting party was attacked.

The Hunting Party

The ambush site is in the center of an ancient grove outside of town in a densely wooded area. Any person in the city can explain the exact location, as it has been the main topic of news and gossip for several days.

During the day, the glade seems to sigh to itself as the wind teases leaves from the trees. At night, the tree branches rasp and shudder like a dying man's breath.

Dark red patches mottle the ground, silently testifying to the lives recently lost here. Scraps of ripped leather and cloth litter the bushes. A cracked, stained hunting horn lies discarded at the base of a blood-stained tree.



If they search, the heroes have a 50% chance of finding two right-handed gloves in the area. One lies near the discarded bugle; the other is half-buried in a pile of leaves about 60 feet away. They are identical and are both embroidered with Thomas's family coat of arms.

In the event that the heroes suspect that Tom is not the real Thomas and search the woods with an eye to places a man might be hidden, a hero with tracking proficiency can find the warded cave in which Count Strahd has stashed Thomas until he needs the heir.

Once the heroes breach the wards, they find Master Thomas, bound and bedraggled, but essentially unharmed. He can recount his kidnapping and has a vague notion that Lyssa is in danger. He tries to persuade the party not to reveal his rescue until they have saved Lyssa, and asks to join the party incognito. If the heroes dither too long at the cave, a warning alarm sounds, calling Strahd back to the cave. If that happens Strahd captures the heroes and Thomas to prevent them from warning Lyssa. Go on to *Turning Day Ritual*, and adjust the scenario to fit the circumstances.

Step into My Parlor

If the heroes go to Lyssa's during the day, a grim woman refuses them entry. She says her mistress is in a swoon and cannot see even Thomas himself until supper time. If the heroes try to force entry, the woman calls three large, heavily armed men to back up her icy suggestion that the party leave.

When the party contacts Lyssa after dark, she graciously invites them in. For once, there is recognition in Tom's eyes.

The heroes enter a room richly decorated with red velvet curtains on all sides. Lyssa offers everyone a seat, reserving a place for Tom next to her. The door opens, admitting a sweet-faced girl, who hands each person a glass of deep red wine. Lyssa warns that she will be deeply hurt if everyone doesn't join her in the toast. The wine is drugged with a *sleep* potion. Hands reach out from behind the curtains.

Any undrugged heroes can fight Lyssa's vampiric slaves. The adventurers must make a horror check once they realize at least 10 vampires surround them. The heroes might kill a few of the slaves, but in the end they should fail against the overwhelming numbers. The vampires aim to incapacitate the heroes, not kill them—so that Lyssa can use them in the Turning Day ritual.

While the heroes might escape themselves, they will have to leave Tom behind—Lyssa spirits him away at the first sign of struggle. If she captured them, Lyssa separates Thomas from the heroes.

The Turning Day Ritual

If captive, the heroes wake during the read-aloud scene.

This ritual is the climax of Strahd's plot against Lyssa. The players should be confused about who their real target is once they discover that a great villain such as Strahd works against Lyssa, their immediate enemy. Closely monitor the party's involvement. They can rescue the real Thomas from one or both vampires, while Lyssa and Strahd are distracted by their own drama, but they cannot affect the drama itself. Strahd is just too powerful for the heroes to successfully defeat, and if they focus on Lyssa, both her minions and Strahd will defend her. Count Strahd wants his kinswoman only weakened, not destroyed.

In the event that you set the adventure in a location other than Zeidenberg, Strahd himself cannot confront his recalcitrant niece. Instead a devoted minion speaks the lines attributed to the Count. Here are the minion's suggested statistics.

Lyssa von Zarovich



Strahd's minion, vampire: AC 1; MV 12 (Fl 18); hp 44; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4; SA Energy drain; SD Immune to garlic and mirrors, +1 magical weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round; MR 5%; SZ Medium (6'); ML Champion (16); Int High (18); AL CE; XP 6,000.

If the heroes found the real Thomas in *The Hunting Party*, he urges the heroes to wait until he determines what Lyssa is doing (for practical purposes, until the end of the rite). Then, he shakes off his horror and rushes forward to confront Lyssa. Adjust the text below as needed.

> Dark figures and wolves dance around a ring of torches. In the center, Thomas is tied between two tall poles. Fear mars his handsome face. He is clad entirely in white. A wide, white band with a cutout edged in red circles the tenderest part of his throat. Lyssa steps into the ring, her hair whipping wildly in the wind. A red gossamer gown accentuates her seductive figure. She brushes her pale fingers over Thomas's cheek. He calms under her gaze. Lyssa turns, addressing the others.
>
> "Nights upon nights are my domain.
> Here I stand forever to reign.
> My birth to death was a powerful deed.
> With this innocent blood I renew my creed!" She tosses back her head, revealing fangs. With a snarl of delight, she sinks them deeply into Thomas's throat. His body convulses as she drinks.

This awful sight requires a horror check.

If the heroes are free, they might leap to Thomas's aid. Lyssa's minions and wolves prevent any contact with their master or the golem. Lyssa ignores any fighting. After five rounds, Tom slumps down.

> Lyssa stands, smiling with ecstacy as blood dribbles down her chin. Suddenly, Lyssa's head snaps up and her eyes fly open. She shrieks and falls to the ground, holding her stomach as she starts to retch. Tom's body starts to decompose rapidly.
>
> A vampire strides forward from the crowd. A host of dire wolves rapidly appear from the woods, forming a semi-circle around him and Lyssa. With a snarl, the vampire stuffs a cloth down Lyssa's throat and pinches her nostrils.

At this point, the heroes, thinking they have an ally, might let the scene play out. If they continue to fight, Lyssa's minions attempt to subdue any opposition to their mistress.

With a leering grin, he says, "No Lyssa, you must not reject my gift. I want you to enjoy this wondrous fellow's blood!"

The vampire's features melt into the harsh but handsome visage of Count Strahd. Her eyes widen with an expression not often held by a vampire—raw fear. After a few moments, Lyssa's struggles quiet. Slowly, she pulls the rag from her mouth and croaks out, "What have you done to me? Why? How?"

Strahd laughs, saying soothingly, "Why my dear, I grant you mercy. The wind whispered to me and told me that you conspired with some mind flayers in another realm to overthrow me. Instead of severing your pretty little head and feeding it to my slaves, I have decided to reform you. I accept you back to my fold, where I will kindly tend to your needs."

"Tend my needs!" spits Lyssa. "I will show you...my strength. Every waking moment I will use to right this insult. With my new allies in this land, I shall succeed."

"Ah, dear child, you will have no such moments. The blood you drank was magical and the vessel a golem. Your precious alliance will be my prize." Strahd gestures and a vampire minion steps forward holding another Thomas. Bravery and defiance mask his fright. Thomas stumbles forward, his hands bound.

"Lyssa? Is that you? Who has turned you evil? I will avenge you!"

"You will not get away with this!" screeches Lyssa, her eyes aflame.

"I already have. Sleep, Lyssa, you are tired. You will tire and sleep as if it were daylight, even in the night, for decades. Only leisurely will you regain the night. I am afraid you will have only enough time to feed for years. Come Lyssa, we will nurture your appreciation for your eldest kin."

Lyssa tries to lunge at Strahd, but falls instead into a swoon of undead slumber.

Now the heroes can take action. If Thomas is free, he tries to reach Lyssa. If he is bound, his first goal is to free himself. Strahd intends to take both Lyssa and Thomas with him to further his plans. Lyssa is his first priority. He ignores the real Thomas if the battle gets too hot.

Count Strahd von Zarovich, Lord of Barovia, 16th-level Necromancer, vampire: AC 1; MV 12, FL 18 (C); hp 55; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4; SA +3 attack, *charm* gaze, energy drain, spells; SD Spells, +2 magical weapon to hit, immune to garlic and mirrors; MR 15%; SZ Medium (6',1"); ML Fearless (20); AL LE.
S 18/76, D 16, C 17, I 18, W 17, C 16.

For more on Strahd, see *Domains and Denizens* in the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set .

Dire wolves (30): AC 6; MV 18; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ Large (10'); ML Average (10); Int Semi (4); AL N; XP 175 each.

About 30 of Lyssa's vampire slaves—in both human and wolf form—occupy the grove.

Vampire slaves (30): AC 1; MV 12, FL 18; hp 22; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 +4; SA Energy drain; SD Immune to garlic/mirrors, +1 magical weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round; SZ Medium; ML Champion (16); Int High (16); AL CE; XP 4,000 each.

Wolf form: AC 7; MV 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SZ (3'-4').

Recurrence

Despite being weakened, Lyssa should escape this scenario—either in Strahd's company or rescued by her own minions. The heroes can encounter her in any domain after she has escaped Strahd again.

For instance, the heroes might encounter her on a quest to obtain some magical item that can restore her power (even partially). Alternately, they might run across Lyssa once she has started rebuilding her network—much of which dissolved without her leadership.

Lyssa might also target the heroes personally, or try to kidnap Thomas again. If Thomas disappears, Lord Zhavov sends word to the heroes, asking them to find him.

And so it is written.
each crime
weaves a just punishment
from the twisted fruits
of its darkest labors.
No criminal can escape this destiny.
The gods stand not idle,
when the heart of justice bleeds
for vengeance.
Punishment is ever the reflection
of the crime.

—excerpt from The Tome of Law,
found among the ruins of the
Temple of the God of Dark Vengeance
in Sebua

Moosha

Biography

Moosha is a unique form of vampire, created not by another of his kind, but by a divine curse.

Appearance

Moosha is a 6-foot-tall, lean man, whose flowing, tan robe covers his entire body. A kaffiyeh shields his head and face, except for his milky-white eyes. His exposed hands and bare feet are covered with severe burn scars.

When Moosha walks, he moves jerkily and grunts often, hampered by the pain and inelasticity of his scar tissue. He moves more freely in vulture or canine form, although his appearance still reflects his curse (a scarred, molting bird or a mangy jackal whose pelt is a patchwork of burnt scars).

Moosha

Desert Vampire, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	1	Str	18/00
Movement	15/Fl 18(C)	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	10+2	Con	18
Hit Points	82	Int	17
THAC0	11	Wis	10
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	5
Morale	16	XP	4,000

Damage/Attack: 1d6+6 (2 attacks per round)
Special Attacks: *Charm* gaze, bodily water drain (see text), can summon 10d4 jackals, can animate and control 1d6 desert zombies.
Special Defenses: Regenerates 3 hp per round, immersion in water acts as *heal* spell, holy water heals 1d6+3 hp.

Jackal form: AC 7; MV 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SZ Medium (4').
Vulture form: AC 6; MV 3, FL 27; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SZ Medium (5').

Moosha feeds off the bodily fluids of his victims—mostly the water in their systems—and drains either with his touch or bite. Draining victims relieves him momentarily from the constant agony of thirst. Draining humans and demihumans gives him greater relief than draining animals. (In game terms, Moosha drains one ability point from a hero's Strength or Constitution per round, but his victim loses permanently only one point per day—your choice as to which stat is affected. Each permanently drained



ability point acts as a *cure serious wounds* spell on Moosha.) The jackals aid him by routinely licking his scars, which offers minor but consistent relief.

Like many vampire types, Moosha can *shapechange*, assuming either a jackal or vulture form. When reduced to zero hit points, he transforms into a small dust devil and retreats to his cave lair to regenerate (after 2d4 days of rest). Moosha can also assume this form at will.

Since Sebua is so small, Moosha is always successful when summoning his 10d4 jackals. With a moment's concentration, he can see through the eyes of any jackal he controls.

Moosha can be harmed by normal weapons, but garlic, mirrors, and most holy items have no effect. He can be turned only by a cleric of one of the gods who cursed him. Contrary to his vampiric nature, holy water actually heals 1d6+3 hit points rather than injuring him. Finally, sunlight does not harm him.

His most fearsome ability is that Moosha can animate the withered corpses of former victims (1d6) within a 100-yard radius. These creatures are identical to the desert zombies described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix III*, except they are child-sized.

Moosha

Background

Moosha was the first son of a wealthy rug merchant in a desert kingdom known to historians as the Black Land. He spent most of his time (and money) pursuing women from all walks of life. With his dashing good looks, persuasive tongue, and pouch of gold, he captured the regard of many a young lady.

Eventually, he set his sights on the beautiful Grand Wife of the pharaoh. She returned his affections, and for many weeks they met surreptitiously in the pharaoh's very palace.

As their affair progressed, they both began to dream about a life beyond the stolen moments they shared. Their only option, however, was to kill the pharaoh, which would allow the Grand Wife to choose a consort. As her consort, Moosha could rule at her side until the pharaoh's heir was old enough to rule.

Moosha, blinded by love, personally carried out their plan. With knowledge of the patrol schedule of the palace guards given by the Grand Wife, he stole into the pharaoh's bedchamber and smothered him as he slept. The dark deed done, he returned to his lover.

The Grand Wife ascended to the throne, and took Moosha as her consort after a suitable period of mourning. The life of royal luxury suited Moosha, as did the opportunity to dally with palace servants while the Grand Wife was occupied with affairs of state. A few years passed, and the pharaoh's son began preparing for the day when he would ascend the throne. Moosha, having no love for the boy, realized that when the boy took power, his life of ease might end.

So he began plotting the death of the young heir. He hinted to the Grand Wife about his ideas, but soon realized she loved her son far too much to consider his removal necessary. In the end, Moosha slew the boy on his own.

But as he departed the scene of his crime, he was confronted by two of the kingdom's deities: the God of Justice and the God of Dark Vengeance. The line of the pharaohs was one of divine blood, and Moosha had just committed one insult too many. "You have quenched the font of divine guidance in the Black Land," the God of Justice said. "You shall suffer greatly for your crimes against gods and mortals. As your people shall thirst for divine guidance and suffer in its absence, so shall you thirst and suffer, until such time as you can restore it to them."

The God of Dark Vengeance gestured, and Moosha felt his mouth and eyes fill with salt, the glare of a thousand days of hot sun tear at his body, and the room dissolve into a furious sandstorm. He shrieked in pain and begged for mercy, his lips moving in a parody of speech long after his voice was no more.

When the storm subsided, Moosha found himself sprawled under a burning sun among ruins partially covered in sand. As he crawled through the rubble, his body wracked with pain, recognition jogged his memory dully. Moosha realized that he stood near the site of the pharaoh's beautiful palace. But his surroundings had changed. It appeared that the centuries had passed while the gods tortured him.

Moosha stumbled into the desert, his once-supple body taut with burn scars. A thirst more painful than his burnt body consumed his being. Among the dunes, he soon discovered that everything he had once known was gone—only ruins remained.

He found the temple of the gods who had condemned him, but only a pack of jackals dwelt among the toppled statues of the deities. He raged hoarsely at the statues, "How can I restore your guidance when all is destroyed?! There is no justice in this, only vengeance! I don't deserve this!"

Moosha collapsed. The jackals cautiously approached him, but instead of attacking, the animals began to lick his wounds, soothing his pain a little. He touched one and immediately his thirst subsided. He grabbed the unfortunate creature with both hands, feeling it shrivel beneath his blackened fingers even as his thirst eased to a bearable level. Thus, Moosha discovered a temporary way to relieve his pain, despite the cursed fate the gods had left him.

For months he wandered the desert, accompanied by his faithful jackals (Moosha controls the jackals with his vampiric will). Whenever his thirst became too great, he drained a jackal of its fluids. Eventually, he discovered an oasis, but when he tried to drink the water, it burned his mouth like acid. Cursing the gods, Moosha wailed at the irony—his body craved water, yet he could only drink from the living.

Moosha stayed at the oasis, considering the water a symbol of his cursed fate. When a small caravan arrived at the oasis, he drained the traders, throwing their withered bodies into the oasis, fouling the water so that no one could drink there again. As he completed this deed, a howling sandstorm rose, and when it cleared, Moosha, his jackal companions, and the oasis had been transported to the domain of Sebua.

Personality

Moosha still seethes with anger at the gods who have cursed him. Preoccupied by his own despair, Moosha shows no compassion for his victims. He feels more kinship for the jackals than humankind.

Combat

A fearsome opponent, Moosha attacks quickly and directly, draining even the sturdiest of opponents. If he reduces a victim's Strength or Constitution to zero in one attack, the victim dies.

He has also developed mental control over his band of jackals, and uses them to help corner victims. Moosha rarely travels without at least 20 jackal companions. If needed, he can summon up to another 20 jackals to assist him.

The Wild Child

This adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 3–6 (about 27 total levels). Although it is designed for the domain of Sebua, it can be adapted easily to any other realm with jackals and a lack of water. If you want to use your own location, skip directly to the adventure.

Sebua is detailed in the *Darklords* accessory, but the previous recap is all the information that is needed to run *The Wild Child* scenario and most spin-off encounters.

Background

Moosha's oasis materialized in the southern part of Sebua. Since he has no curiosity about the world, and no immediate need to forage for food or shelter, he does not realize that he no longer walks the desert of the Black Land.

He has not explored the domain beyond the area between his oasis and the ruined city of Anhalla, where he has found prey among the wild children who dwell there.

Ironically, those children, his prey, are the key to Moosha's salvation. Among the wild children are direct descendants of the pharaohs of the Black Land—illegitimate descendants, but descendants nonetheless. Their resemblance to carvings in the Valley of Death is striking.

The Domain of Sebua

Sebua is a small wasteland, less than 40 miles from edge to edge. The terrain ranges from soft sand dunes to rocky flats to steep granite cliffs. Water holes and oases are scattered across the domain, but two-thirds are either dry or foul.

Most of Sebua's oases are fringed with reeds where hordes of bloodthirsty mosquitoes breed and hatch. Each night, the sky fills with them. In the northern part of the domain is a lake that has been tinged red by mineral deposits. Here the mosquitoes are particularly hardy, and cloth and thin leather are no protection from the female's long, slender feeding tube. Faces, unless completely covered, are particularly vulnerable. In less than a minute, exposed eyelids can become swollen shut.

By day, the deserts are scorched with heat. Yet, the sky is often dark with storm clouds gathering in the morning and lowering in the sky. By afternoon, the clouds may release a brief, intense torrent, but the water quickly seeps into the sand. Sometimes, the sky turns green, then black, indicating an approaching sandstorm.

The clouds always dissipate at night, revealing a virtually starless sky in which an orange moon hangs, casting an amber glow on the rocks and sand.

The Valley of Death lies in the northeastern quarter of Sebua, cutting from north to south. Sandstone cliffs from 500 to 1,000 feet high form the valley's walls. Sand periodically cascades to the valley floor from the ledge with a soft hiss.

The valley was once the site of great temples honoring the gods of the land, including those that cursed Moosha. Virtually all of these temples are now in ruin; only their tall columns remain.

The valley is also the site of great tombs, belonging to pharaohs, nobles, their officials, and families. Cut into the cliffs, most tombs reveal only their great facades to the valley below. Untold treasures and unknown horrors wait within. The walls above the tombs are carved with detailed reliefs featuring the mightiest deeds of the entombed pharaoh.

The massive rock formation from which the Valley of Death was carved marks the northeastern border of Sebua. Explorers who manage to scale the heights to reach this border find that the mountains end abruptly, plunging into an abyss. Dark, heavy clouds hug the wall of the precipice hundreds of feet below the edge.

The city of Anhalla lies near the center of the domain, not far from the mouth of the valley. Like the temples in the Valley of Death, the city has been ravaged by time—the locations of buildings are marked only by their foundations. At the center of Anhalla lies a vast oasis. A handful of poorly built mud-brick houses have replaced the once great buildings of the city.

Anhalla is the center of most life in Sebua. The ruins and brick houses are overrun by ill-tempered monkeys and vicious baboons, who steal from and harass travelers who stop at the oasis. In addition, several dozen shy, elusive children live here. Where

they originally came from is unknown, but it is said that they do not ever seem to age.

The other notable location in the domain is a walled estate in the northern part of Sebua. The estate and its well-ordered grounds are in perfect condition, but there is generally no activity there... despite the fact that sometimes, when the wind is right, the sounds of music and laughing can be heard faintly, as if a party were in progress. This estate is the home of Sebua's dark lord, Tiyet, who survives by eating the hearts of the living. If you want to use her in your campaign, refer to the *Darklords* (9331) accessory.

The Adventure Begins

As the heroes travel through the wasteland of Sebua, a shriek pierces the desert air, quickly followed by another. Over a slight ridge, the heroes see a dark-skinned boy dressed in tatters, his hair wild and unkempt, standing atop the circular wall of a well, swinging a large stick at a pack of slavering jackals. The boy is howling at the top of his lungs, and the jackals are snarling and yapping as he swings and kicks at them. Heroes with the animal lore proficiency, or who are familiar with jackals, notice that the jackals are behaving far too aggressively.

Jackals (8): AC 7; MV 12; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SZ Small (3' long); Int Low (8); ML Elite (13) (controlled by Moosha); AL CE; XP 7 each.

In two rounds (if unassisted), the boy bashes two jackals with his makeshift club, then flees across the desert with the mangy-looking animals in hot pursuit. Failure to aid the boy in an obviously unequal fight is grounds for a powers check. If the heroes have a change of heart and try to chase after the boy, they find the jackals feasting on his corpse, which looks strangely shriveled. Skip directly to *The Vampire Strikes*.

More likely, the heroes help the boy. Once the combat is over, and the jackals have been driven off or killed, instead of showing gratitude, the boy remains on the wall, threatening them with the club while growling and hooting and gibbering at them in a language none of the heroes understand. In fact, the noises remind the heroes of nothing so much as wild monkeys.

Being one of the wild children from Anhalla, the boy is essentially an animal, and should be approached as such. Rangers can attempt to soothe him much they would a panicked animal, while a *speak with animals* spell allows a priest or druid to communicate with him.

The boy can provide the following answers for the heroes (but gives only one- or two-word replies, as indicated):

- What's your name?: "Ar."
- What's the name of this country?: "World."
- Where are your parents?: "Who?"
- Who takes care of you?: "Ar."
- Where to you live?: [Points in the direction of Anhalla.]
- Do the jackals often attack people around here?: "Only Scabby near."
- Who is Scabby?: "Scabby. Big one. Talk jackals."
- Where is Scabby now?: [Shrugs, points in the direction of the southern oasis.]

If the heroes have other questions for Ar, you should decide if the boy is capable of answering them. If he is not, Ar just stares at the party, cocking his head to one side in puzzlement.

With regards to Scabby (the children's name for



Moosha), Ar can't really tell much more than he already has. He knows Scabby lives in the oasis and that he controls the jackals. He also knows that any child touched by Scabby becomes his to control. Ar does not realize the child is dead. The boy takes the heroes close to Scabby's oasis, but refuses to go there himself.

Note: If a hero used a *charm mammal* spell to gain Ar's trust, Ar becomes the hero's retainer, displaying a level of affection that most kittens display toward their mothers. He wants to go where the hero goes, do what the hero does, and stay with the hero all costs—even if that means following him into the Mists once the party decides to leave Sebua.

Ar, wild child, human male: AC 7; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club) or 1d2 (bite); SZ Medium (4', 4" tall); ML Fanatic (17); AL N.
S 6, D 18, C 11, I 10, W 4, Ch 13.

If Ar becomes a follower and a regular character in an ongoing campaign, his statistics (particularly in Strength, Intelligence, and Wisdom) might increase in time, depending on a number of factors such as story needs, the involvement of the player characters in his training, and the amount of bookkeeping you want to do. For possible ways to use Ar in a campaign, review the *Recurrence* section.

The Vampire Strikes

Once the heroes have made contact with Ar, they have drawn Moosha's attention as well. The vampire witnesses their rescue of his "nourishment" through the eyes of one of the jackals, and is consumed with rage at being thwarted in his purpose. He now considers the heroes his targets.

Regardless of whether the heroes escort Ar to Anhalla, go part way with him, or turn him loose and head in the opposite direction, read the following text:

> Reaching the crest of a dune, you find yourself face to face with a horde of about two dozen jackals. They appear mangier than those that attacked the boy, and one's fur is a hideous patchwork of twisted scars. The pack emits a series of haunting, piercing howls and charges toward you.

Jackals (15): AC 7; MV 12; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SZ Small (3' long); Int Low (8); ML Elite (13) (controlled by Moosha); AL CE; XP 7 each.

The jackals descend on the heroes by the end of the first round. Moosha, the hideously scarred jackal, hangs back in order to call another set of attackers once the heroes have engaged the jackals.

> As the jackals swarm around you, the sand shifts around you, moving under your feet. Withered hands erupt from the sand, writhing and grabbing at your legs. Farther away, figures emerge from the sand, and the figures appear to be children. Dead children. Their skin is drawn tight over their bones, and sand pours from their gaping mouths as they stumble toward you.

The sight of the diminutive desert zombies calls for a horror check. There is one zombie attacker for each hero, and they proceed without hesitation.

Desert zombies (variable): AC 7; MV 12; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ Medium (4'); Int Average (10); ML Fearless (20); AL NE; XP 120 each.

As the heroes engage both the zombies and the jackals, Moosha circles from behind, targeting either the person who most zealously protected Ar, or the one least defended. If the targeted hero fails a surprise roll against Moosha's rear attack, then Moosha gains a +4 bonus to hit. Moosha lunges at the hero, assuming human form in mid-leap. His attack takes place on the fourth round. Speak with the targeted player privately to arrange a reaction along the lines of the boxed text.

> The battle is at its most furious when one of your comrades screams in soul-wrenching agony. Your friend's face contorts in horrible pain. From behind, a man in flowing robes has wrapped his arms around your friend's leg. The figure grips the ankle firmly with his charred left hand, while digging talon-like fingernails into his thigh. The scarred man sinks long fangs into the back of your friend's knee.

The attacked hero must make a horror check with a +2 penalty.

Once his victim is freed (or dead), Moosha engages the rest of the party in battle. He does not flee until he has lost 60 or more hit points. At that point, he *shapechanges* into a vulture and flies away. If reduced to zero hit points before he can retreat, he dissolves

Moosha



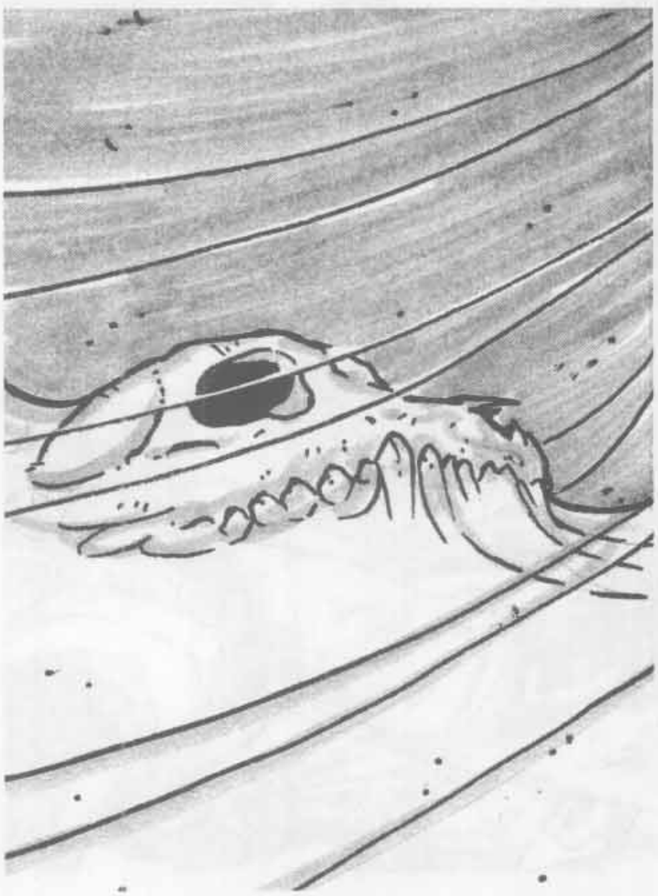
into a small dust devil and begins the journey back to his lair to regenerate.

Recurrence

Once regenerated from the attack, Moosha can return and torment the heroes over and over. Since Moosha is not bound to Sebua, he can even pursue the heroes into the Mists if they choose to leave this parched land.

Since Moosha was created by a divine curse, the best way to vanquish him is to lift the curse. However, convincing a villain to change his ways is often tougher than simply eliminating him, both in terms of rhetoric and in terms of role-playing. The heroes must investigate their quarry and discover his story, or convince him to tell them the tale.

In order to lift the curse, the vampire must refuse to feed on the children, and instead teach them the ways of the gods and traditions of his ancient people. As the descendants of the pharaohs gradually come to understand their heritage, Moosha's scars begin to heal and eventually he reverts to his handsome mortal form. He may even be able to enjoy years as his former self until an heir is old enough to leave Ravenloft through the Mists and return to the Black Land to claim the kingdom. When that time comes, Moosha dissolves into red sand forever.



If the heroes stay in Sebua, they might become familiar with the children of Anhalla. The mystery surrounding their eternal youth and their connection to Moosha's curse and salvation could be fashioned into an adventure of its own. You could direct the heroes to uncover such clues as finding a child who resembles a pharaoh's carving in the Valley of Death, or overhearing Moosha cursing the gods that condemned him, thus revealing in part the nature of his condition. Such clues can lead the heroes on a quest to send the vampire to his final rest.

In a campaign game, encouraging a hero to become Ar's guardian and teacher could prove an interesting role-playing experience. Ar could also be used to set up the heroes for true horror, demonstrating how cruel the RAVENLOFT setting can be.

You should portray Ar sympathetically as a boy who, despite the harshness of life in Anhalla, is still an innocent. Although initially a burden and an irritant (always going through the heroes' gear, etc.), allow Ar to eventually win their respect through acts of bravery, selflessness, or deep displays of affection for all members of the party.

Once the heroes grow attached to Ar, just as Ar finally grasps the concept of using utensils at the dinner table, just when he begins to show some aptitude in whatever class the heroes are training him, you should have the darkness of Ravenloft touch Ar in some horrible, debilitating way. For instance, you could have an enemy of the heroes abduct the boy, or could have Ar fall during a battle as prey to some cursed horror like Moosha.

Whatever the circumstances, Ar should be left an emotional shadow of his former self, perhaps even hopelessly insane. At the very least, his innocence should be shattered and replaced with cruelty, anger, or complete introversion. Such a scenario, if played properly, can be more heart wrenching and terrifying to the heroes than any number of vampires. It can also provide the heroes with a plot for revenge and/or justice, launching them into their next adventure. (You will know that the above-outlined thread was a success if the players are upset with you.)

Garsonne knew it for a nightmare,
but could not escape the
sticky strands of fear any more
than he could have cut through the nets
his grandfather wove.
There was something in the surf,
some deadly thing,
yet no one heard his pleas,
no one saw his lips framing the words
over and over:
"Don't go in the water . . ."

—Old Sharky's ghost story

Myxitizajal

Biography

Myxitzajal was once the lord of an ixitxachitl city on a world covered almost entirely by oceans. He commanded over 500 warriors and vampiric ixitxachitls.

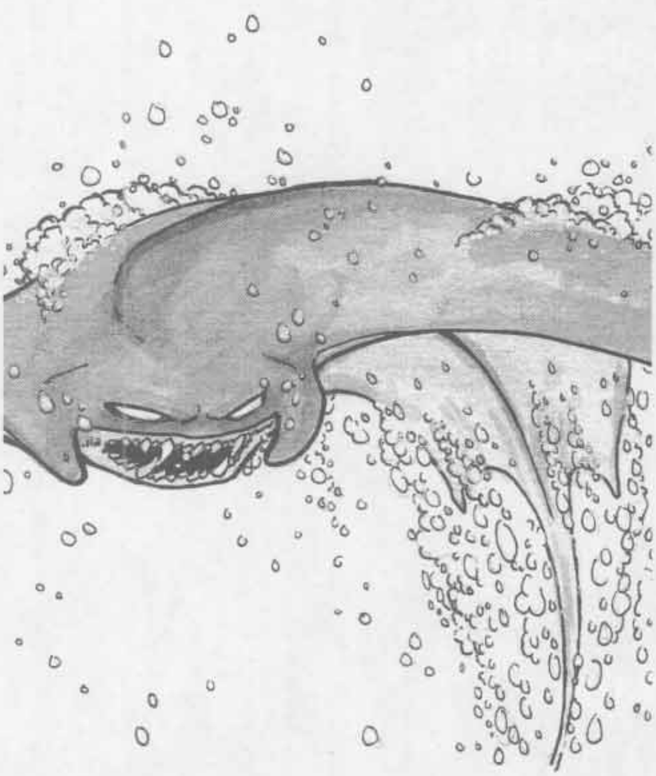
Appearance

Myxitzajal (Mik-ZIT-za-jal) looks like a manta ray with a 10-foot wingspan and a long barbed tail. His back or dorsal side is mottled gray, while his underbelly, or ventral side, gleams pasty white. Like most rays, Myxitzajal's mouth appears on his ventral side, 2 feet wide and filled with sharp, rasping teeth. Two of the upper teeth are especially long, revealing his vampiric nature. His slitted eyes glow, faintly orange, on his dorsal side.

Myxitzajal

Greater Vampiric Ixitxachitl, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	6	Str	18/76
Movement	Sw 18	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	8+8	Con	16
Hit Points	72	Int	14
THAC0	13	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Morale	14	XP	4,000



Damage/Attack: 3d4 (bite) or 1d10 (stinger)
Special Attacks: Energy drain (two levels per bite).
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *charm* spells; regeneration; ink spray.
Special Weaknesses: Suffers 1d6 damage per round of direct exposure to sun.
Artifact: *Pearl of enthrallment*; see text.

Vampiric ixitxachitls are touched upon in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ accessory, and slightly expanded here. Like most other vampires, Myxitzajal is only active at night. Sunlight causes him1d6 hit points of damage per round. By the time the sun rises, he has settled to the bottom of the sea and covered himself with mud.

Pearl of enthrallment: The fist-sized pearl dangles from a coral chain. It was created long ago on Myxitzajal's homeworld as an aid to keep the lord's subjects in line. Its powers have been warped by the weird energies of Ravenloft. Now the pearl enthralls all victims (except the owner) within a one-mile radius whose Wisdom is lower than 16. Targets endlessly repeat the activities and emotions of a single day (this effect is similar to the situation in the movie *Groundhog Day*, though horrific rather than humorous). Victims have a chance to break the enthrallment once a day by sucessfully saving vs. spell at dawn. The curse of *artifact possession* gradually makes the pearl's owner hate his own kind with a passion. The pearl can be destroyed by dissolving it at spring flood tide in wine crushed by the feet of elves.

Background

When he was still young, Myxitzajal was chosen to succeed a greater vampire ixitxachitl. His first act upon being reborn was to drive a coral shard through his creator's heart. He inherited from his predecessor a pendant set with the *pearl of enthrallment*. This magical artifact worked continuously to keep his subjects obedient, but its price was subtle. Over the years, the fist-sized pearl made Myxitzajal grow to hate his courtiers.

One day, an adviser dared criticize the lord's hunting technique. Myxitzajal shot through the water and sank his teeth into the insolent ixitxachitl! To the horror of his undersea court, he drained the adviser dry.

That day Myxitzajal added cannibalism to his tyrannical repetoire. Every day, he accused at least one

courtier or warrior of disloyalty or treason, then drained him or her on the spot.

Finally one of the other ixitxachitls broke free of the pearl's enthrallment and led a massive revolt. Myxitzajal fled from his pursuers, taking the *pearl of enthrallment* with him. He swam so long that he began to believe he was heading back into the fangs of his pursuers. Just as panic set in, he emerged into the murky salt water off the coast of a large swampy island. The powers of Ravenloft had claimed the vampiric monster.

Once Myxitzajal arrived in the land of Mists he swam about, looking for food. Centuries of pampering had made him nearly incapable of capturing food of his own, but the pearl enthralled some creatures, and they kept him alive until he stumbled across the village.

While Myxitzajal is most likely to be encountered in Souragne, any sub-tropical or tropical waters will do. It is even possible to place him temporarily in the Sea of Sorrows; use the Mists to drag him and his victims back to his home waters after an initial sighting. He has no contact with the domain lord.

Personality

Except that he lacks the companionship of his species, Myxitzajal feels intrigued by his new environs. He does not realize that the changed *pearl of enthrallment* causes the recurring ritual swimmers that have made his hunting simple again; he merely basks in the ease with which he catches victims.

Combat

Unlike most vampire types, vampiric and greater vampiric ixitxachitls cannot *charm* victims, assume *gaseous form* or perform other *shapechanging* feats. They must instead rely on brute force.

Myxitzajal generally attacks head-on. Occasionally he conceals himself on the silty sea bottom and attacks swimmers from below. (He receives no bonuses to the victim's surprise roll, as he isn't very stealthy.) When he sinks his teeth into his opponent, he inflicts 3d4 points of damage and drains two levels. In subsequent rounds, the vampire inflicts 1d6 points of damage, and continues to drain levels, unless the victim makes a bend bars/lift gates roll to break free of his jaws.

If threatened from the rear or the side, Myxitzajal uses his tail stinger like a whip causing 1d10 hit points damage (but no draining). Since his eyes rotate 360 degrees, it is difficult to surprise Myxitzajal. However, those who attack his ventral side gain a +2 to their attack rolls.

Losing 50 or more hit points causes Myxitzajal to release a stream of blood-red ink which engulfs everything in a 100-foot diameter. He attacks normally, while other creatures suffer a –2 penalty to their initiative and a –4 penalty to their attack rolls.

Should Myxitzajal be reduced to zero hit points, his body seems to burst into a cloud of red ink that settles to the bottom and seeps into the mud. Twenty-four hours later, Myxitzajal emerges from the sea floor, fully healed.

The Ritual Repeats

This adventure is for four to six characters levels 3–5 (about 20 levels total). It is recommended that the heroes have at least one magical weapon, and that most or all possess the swimming proficiency. You might wish to review *Holding Your Breath* (chapter 14 in the *Player's Handbook*) and *Underwater Combat* (chapter 9 in the *Dungeon Master® Guide*).

Background

A priestess lives near a small fishing village. The villagers respect and fear Majenka for her herbal potions and her sharp temper. Majenka carefully conceals her inability to cross open water from the locals. In fact, she has cleverly instigated a ritual in the settlement to overcome this limitation.

Each summer solstice, a villager dives off the dock and swims to a little island a mile offshore. When the swimmer returns with a sprig of rare herb, Majenka blesses the village's fishing fleet for the coming year, and keeps them safe from storms.

During this year's ritual, Myxitzajal was trolling for victims near the village. The vampire found the swimmer tasty, so he planted his *pearl of enthrallment* artifact among the sunken wreckage of a ship, hoping to attract more swimmers. However, instead of simply enthralling all victims within a one-mile radius as it used to do, the pearl now makes the villagers relive the last 24 hours—the ritual day—over and over again. Each evening, as dusk falls, a chosen villager swims to the island to bring back the herb sprig. Each day, Myxitzajal feasts on a new swimmer.

Majenka's wisdom makes her immune to the artifact. She realizes something is altering her people's perceptions, and guesses it is magical in nature. She also sees the giant raylike beast in the water.

When she tries to turn the villagers back from the ritual, they go out in their fishing boats instead, and the vampire upsets a boat and captures his meal. If she tries to convince the people that a great monster swims

in the sea, they climb into their boats to pursue it, and again Myxitzajal claims his victim. Enraged at the loss of her precious herb, and fearful that her village will dwindle to nothing under Myxitzajal's predations, Majenka has sent for the adventurers to rid the village of the creature and—once she confirms its existence—recover his artifact.

The Adventure Begins

If the heroes are not already traveling in Souragne—after the *Night of the Walking Dead* adventure (9352), for example—or Myxitzajal's home waters, contrive a reason for them to visit. Perhaps a ship on which they are traveling gets lost in a storm or in heavy fog, and puts in to the village to get its bearings, or perhaps the Mists seize them. The adventure starts as the heroes arrive in town at dusk.

> Night is falling and the breeze carries the smell of ocean, brackish water, and smoke, as you approach the crowded, ramshackle town. Most of the wooden houses have peeling paint or cracked shutters. Many of the windows are barred, and several doors have strange symbolic collections of bones, feathers, and dried insects or frogs nailed to them. Sounds of merriment fill the air.

In Souragne, they arrive in Port d'Elhour; elsewhere, you can name the town. The streets stand deserted, but if the heroes follow the sounds, they hear a loud cheer just as they reach a house where the windows and doors are flung wide. As the heroes watch, a young woman with flowing, dark hair separates from the party and runs toward them. She grabs the hero with the highest Charisma and shouts cheerfully:

> "Join us, strangers! I have the best news! Tonight my brother has been chosen to make the journey!" As she starts pulling you toward the revelers, a boy in his early teens separates from the crowd. Long, white garments clothe his limbs. A crown of flowers circles his head at a rakish angle.

The young woman introduces herself as Amie and the boy as her brother Jacques, just chosen to be the swimmer of the ritual. They offer bowls of spicy seafood stew to any heroes who join the party. A three-member band plays lively music on a washtub, banjo, and accordian. If the heroes decline her invitiation, skip to *The Horror Offshore*.

Make the party scene as long or compact as your players allow. Flesh out Amie and Jacques as sympathetic characters by explaining their tragic past (orphaned as teenagers by a violent storm), their bright hopes (she works in the fishing fleet, he hopes to become a cleric), and their overall niceness. The details that they or any townsfolk impart now will be useful later in the adventure to establish a feeling of déjà vu among the party—any information the townsfolk share now, they will have forgotten discussing by tomorrow. Jot down notes about which heroes spoke to which villagers for future reference, if you like.

Should a hero ask for details about the journey, one of the townsfolk replies that the journey is the greatest honor in the town. Since Jacques is starting now, the party should come along and see.

The Horror Offshore

The wild mood of the party just a few moments ago fades abruptly as the parade gathers itself together. Solemnity drops like a blanket, subduing even the youngest child. With Jacques at their head, the villagers set out on a winding march through the tiny streets, gathering stragglers into the fold as they go, and singing a droning hymn.

By the time they reach the town's docks, the procession has swelled to almost 200 people. Their song is at once moving and somehow chilling. Even if the heroes did not attend the party, they witness this procession winding its way toward the docks.

There, a black-garbed man says a prayer in honor of the harvest and Jacques undresses. His sister gives him a kiss on the forehead, and the boy dives into the water.

> "Oh, mighty guardian, accept this lad into your embrace. Keep us safe from the raging tides of your displeasure and keep our nets filled," intones the man in black.
>
> As Jacques swims through the darkening waves, you notice a distinct ripple in the water. The ripple vanishes, and a moment later Jacques' young body arcs clear of the water, arms and legs flailing. As he splashes down, a large shape, barely visible against the murky sea, breaches the waves. The boy screams with pain, and the shape vanishes into the dark water.
>
> "This is not the way it usually happens," says Amie fearfully.
>
> A villager replies in a whisper, "Perhaps the gods are testing us. Perhaps they are angry." The ixitxachitl breaches the surface again, and Jacques's body starts plowing rapidly away from shore as he continues to scream.
>
> "Something's wrong," Amie shouts, but the crowd keeps singing.

If the heroes try to save Jacques, it is too late: When they reach him, they find him dead, his legs savagely torn (Myxitzajal, in his delight, decided to play with his "food"). Win or lose, action against the creature brings the heroes into conflict with an angry and fearful mob of townspeople afterward.

Townspeople, 0-level humans (50): AC 10; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (machetes); SZ Medium; ML Steady (11); Int Average (8); AL N.

Most townspeople feel they should not interfere with the swimmer's journey—in fact, perhaps the strangers' presence caused the disturbing outcome. Depending on the heroes' actions, choose whether the townspeople eject the adventurers or merely mutter about them behind their backs. Whether the heroes stay overnight in the village or camp outside of it, Majenka approaches them the next morning.

Majenka Intervenes

The next morning, if the heroes remained in the village, all animosity to them seems forgotten. Townsfolk greet them cheerfully, and ask about their travels as if they have just arrived. If any of the heroes engaged a villager in extensive conversation at the party, the villager shows no sign of recognition today. Just as the heroes begin to investigate this peculiar attitude, they are met by a dark-skinned woman dressed in outlandishly colored garments.

> Sewn onto every surface of her outfit, bone and wooden amulets and strange ornaments rattle with the priestess's every movement. Her head is topped by a turban of intricately knotted cloth, to which feathers and bones have been stitched. Dark eyes, hooded and intense look you over. She beckons you to follow, and turns away immediately.

If the heroes resist, act out every nonverbal trick you know to get the heroes to accompany the priestess, including staring, making other gestures, and even displaying a handful of gold coins to tempt the most mercenary of the party's members.

Majenka leads them to her cabin two miles outside of town. She only addresses their questions after they arrive. Then she introduces herself and explains the situation as she knows it: That raylike creature they saw last night has been in the area two weeks. Some magical ability or artifact it possesses makes the town—her town—repeat the ritual day over and over. If the heroes disbelieve her, she grimly predicts that they will see it themselves. She explains that she has developed herbal



fetishes (one per hero; they last 1d4+1 days) to protect the heroes from the enthralling effects, and asks the heroes to help her vanquish the monster.

Majenka can also provide information. First, the creature is immune to poison (she has tried poisoning a swimmer with a potent, slow-acting venom—unfortunately, this has had no effect on the beast). Second, it only shows itself at night. These are both clues to Myxitzajal's vampiric nature.

Her equipment includes:

1. Three small swamp boats. Each holds up to four people and is oar-propelled. Each vessel has one hull point.
2. 200 feet of rope. The general store has more at the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*.
3. Grapnels: The general store has one for the standard *Player's Handbook* price.
4. Magical weapons: The priestess owns a *harpoon +1*, a relic from an old ship.
5. Water breathing: Majenka has two *tablets of waterbreathing* created from swamp herbs. She says their effects last thirty minutes each.

Majenka, 3rd-level priest: AC 9; MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace made of the skull of a fox); SA and SD Spells; SZ Medium (5', 6" tall); ML Steady (12); AL CG; XP 650.
S 9, D 14, C 9, I 12, W 16, Ch 10.
Spells: 1st—*bless* (×2), *faerie fire, entangle,* 2nd—*charm person or mammal, heat metal.*

Perhaps the heroes don't believe Majenka, or some refuse her fetishes. Any party members with Widsom lower than 16 must successfully save vs. spell once they enter the pearl's area of effect (essentially the village border). Failure means the hero falls under the pearl's enthrallment (a great role-playing opportunity), and might even be chosen as the swimmer.

Once the heroes have a plan, or if they completely ignore Majenka, they can return to the village. The villagers greet them as if they are just arriving, and return to their discussion of whom to choose tonight to make the ritual swim. Should the adventurers protest that all this happened yesterday, the townsfolk refuse to listen. If they ask for Jacques, the villagers calmly suggest he went with his sister and the fleet this morning. The locals assure the heroes they needn't worry—youths are famous for playing hooky from their duties once in a while.

Again, as evening falls, there is laughter, music and dancing. This time Amie rejoices that she will make the journey. She confides that Jacques is probably preparing a surprise for her—"he'll show up, don't fret!" Play up the horror by repeating the initial read-alouds. The townsfolk shrug off arguments, and if the heroes get physical in trying to stop Amie, the villagers fight them off.

Amie's swim results in the same the outcome as Jacques's journey the night before.

Investigating the Ixitxachitl

Daytime underwater searchers for the monster have a 1% cumulative chance per day of coming across the vampire's resting place—the clear area where it buries itself (seaweed, coral, rocks, and ship parts litter most of the sea bottom). Chances increase by 3% if anyone uses the *tablets of waterbreathing*, or a similar natural ability. As each day passes, the villagers choose another ritual swimmer and another innocent plunges into the ocean to his death.

The heroes can attack the monster or attempt to capture it. Nets do not snag the creature, and only a magical weapon can penetrate Mixitzajal's leathery skin. A grapnel enchanted with a *bless* spell, however, does work.

If they hit Myxitzajal with the *harpoon +1*, the vampire's first action is to swim away. Myxitzajal swims strongly, and with sufficient play in the rope (100 feet or more), he can work up to full speed. His strength is sufficient to drag the whole swamp boat—heroes, equipment and all—underwater when he dives. Just like whalers of old, the heroes can take a "Nantucket sleigh ride" to the bottom where the monster rests. Of course, they might choose to cut the rope, or fling themselves into the water rather than be drowned. You can send a fisherman by to sweep up particularly hapless or poor-rolling heroes, if you need to.

At all times in melee, the adventurers have a 15% chance of seeing the creature's vampiric teeth (100% if a hero has line of sight and looks at the teeth, or if he gets bitten).

Recurrence

If the heroes remove the *pearl of enthrallment*, Myxitzajal seeks easier prey, perhaps attacking another village's fishing fleet. Eventually, the heroes discover his vampiric nature.

To destroy this monster, the heroes must drive a coral shard through his heart, then haul the staked carcass to the beach until it smolders in the sunlight and disappears in a cloud of red smoke. The priestess (or a druid hero) knows that the "heart" should be about 2 feet behind the eyes.

Whether or not the heroes end up with the *pearl of enthrallment*, their knowledge of its existence might be beneficial when they deal with Mulger d'Ajust in *The Way Out*, page 86.

I have learned that in fact it is
the antithesis of beauty
that is beautiful:
There is poetry in taking the fair skin
of a peasant lass or merry boy and
molding it into something . . . well,
let's call it creative. Or, best of all,
turning the energy and vigor
of an inspired leader into a
rotting cesspool of despair!
That, my lord, is the true essence of
vampirism for my breed."

—From the diary of Yosef Mertels,
a conversation overheard by Mertels
between Baron Urik von Kharkov and his
loyal servant and protector, Lady Adeline

Lady Adeline



Biography

Lady Adeline is a Silvanesti elf from Krynn. However, all that remains of Adeline's former self is her strong sense of loyalty and an insatiable aggressiveness, both of which are skillfully focused by her patron, Baron von Kharkov. Adeline would never betray him.

Appearance

In appearance, Lady Adeline is a 5 foot, 5 inch, slender elven female. Her flaxen hair hangs loosely below her shoulders, hiding her pointed elven ears. A gauzelike veil conceals her bright green eyes, her well formed vampiric teeth, and her absolutely twisted, scarred face. Her skin is pale, but lustrous.

Adeline wears a leather tunic over a loose-fitting, comfortable shirt and kilt. A golden locket hangs from her neck on a leather thong. On her back she carries a *long bow +1* and a quiver with 30 bone-tipped sheaf arrows. A long sword and dagger hang from her rugged belt. The bow and arrows appear quite ordinary; their magical bonus can only be discovered through appropriate spells or experimentation.

Also tucked into her belt is a pair of leather gloves that she uses when handling plants.

Lady Adeline

Elf Vampiress, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	2	Str	18/01
Movement	15	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	7+3	Con	15
Hit Points	45	Int	17
THAC0	13	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	By weapon	Cha	–5
Morale	19	XP	15,000

Damage/Attack: Arrows 1d8 (+1 for long bow), long sword 1d8 (+3 for Strength), dagger 1d4 (+3 for Strength), unarmed combat 1d4

Special Abilities: Paralyzing look (victim unable to move immediately and for an additional 1d4 rounds after seeing her face; save negates, but victims die if they roll a natural "1" on the saving roll), total of +6 on missile attacks, *shapechange* into wild or giant eagle, spell abilities, kills any plant form on touch, commands 3d6 wolves, 5d6 birds of prey or 6d6 small mammals (arriving in 1d6 turns).

Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon, regenerates 2 hp per round, can transport via plants at will (killing the plant), unaffected by mirrors, holy symbols, garlic, or holy water, immune to *charm* spells of any sort, half damage only from magical fire and cold-based spells, immune to poison or disease of any type.

Special Weaknesses: Being outside after sunset or beneath the earth's surface at any time inflicts 1d4 points of damage per round with no regeneration possible, fresh (within six hours) sap of deciduous tree inflicts 2d4 points of damage, unable to cross an unbroken line of flower petals picked within 24 hours.

Spell Abilities: 1st—*pass without trace* and *invisibility to animals* (at will), *entangle*, 2nd—*warp wood*, 3rd—*snare*, *spike growth*, 4th—*sticks to snakes*, *giant insect* , 6th—*anti-animal shell* (×3), *wall of thorns*.

Wild eagle form: MV 1, Fl 30(C); #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1; others per vampire form.
Giant eagle form: MV 3; Fl 48(D); #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6.

Background

An aggressive child, Adeline favored rugged clothing and rough manners over the diaphanous robes and syl-

van ways of her kin. Her odd proclivities proclaimed her a perfect candidate for the adventuring life. When she reached young adulthood, she successfully applied for membership in an elite adventuring company and left her homeland. Adeline soon proved herself to be an extremely proficient archer and swordswoman. Her immediate superiors were quick to praise the young Silvanesti.

By her fifth year, Adeline had gained enough experience and rank to lead her own adventuring party. Her first mission was to wipe out the secret temple of some evil beast worshippers. The fight was long and hard, with many casualties, and in the end Adeline was captured. The cult subjected her to dark, mysterious rites that she did not understand, and she was left disfigured and scarred beyond recognition.

As she lay chained in the catacombs under the temple, Adeline prayed for vengeance. A soft voice answered her. A petite elven women appeared out of the shadows, her face so pale it almost glowed. Her fangs glinted in the dim torch light. Weak and bound, Adeline could not resist the vampire. When Adeline regained consciousness, the vampire was gone.

When the cult guard came to take her away, he took one look at her face and died. Taking the keys, Adeline unchained herself, and then went on a rampage of furious revenge. When she was through, her mission was at last completed—though at the cost of both her party and her sanity. She departed in a driving thunderstorm.

When the rain lifted, the elven swordswoman found herself in a land called Valachan. She also discovered that she could not abide the darkness of night. Vines withered at her touch as she brushed them aside searching for shelter. Once inside a shack, she cast a *light* spell around herself to banish painful darkness. Adeline had become an elven vampire.

Eventually Valachan's ruler, Baron Urik von Kharkov, noticed her and invited her to his keep. They became friends, bound by mutual understanding and needs. While most people could not abide Adeline's horrid looks, Von Kharkov offered her companionship and the safety of his keep, Castle Pantara, in exchange for Lady Adeline's promise to keep it secure during the daylight hours when Von Kharkov had to rest. She agreed readily.

Von Kharkov and Lady Adeline have a very trusting, symbiotic relationship. She resides in Castle Pantara, which she guards during the daytime (the most vulnerable time for many vampires—when hunters laden with stakes, mallets, and holy wafers look for their lairs).

At sunset, when Von Kharkov and his other vampiric slaves arise, Adeline retires to her coffin, which protects her from the night's darkness. Only the bravest (or



foolish) would dare invade Castle Pantara after dark fall.

Von Kharkov commissions villagers to do chores in Castle Pantara during the day. As a courtesy and reward, Von Kharkov allows Lady Adeline to use these villagers to satisfy her cravings to hurt others. Since she does not draw blood, Adeline does not reduce the baron's food supply. Furthermore, since Adeline chooses only the best and brightest to disfigure, Kharkov has a way to effectively forestall anyone who might otherwise have had the leadership potential to start an uprising.

Valachan and Von Kharkov are detailed in *Domains and Denizens* in the *Ravenloft Campaign Setting* boxed set. More information on Von Kharkov appears in *Darklords* (9331).

Personality

The dark rituals inflicted on Lady Adeline and her transformation into a vampire have warped her personality. Her previously beautiful, sultry facial features have become a hideous landscape of scars, pock marks, and deep, uneven wrinkles. Something snapped when she first saw her face, and Adeline resolved that beauty itself needed to be redefined—in her image. Accordingly, she targets individuals who possess exceptional good looks or who exude confidence and leadership, and scars them horribly. Taking her victim's face or body in her bare hands, she molds one particular feature into a grotesque parody of its previous form. Lady Adeline's goal is to destroy all beauty of appearance and thought wherever she finds it.

Also, being a fairly young vampire, Adeline revels in her immortality and believes that nothing can seriously harm her.

Combat

Even before she became a vampire, Lady Adeline was fearsome in combat. Her vampiric abilities and cunning have only made these skills deadlier.

She defends Castle Pantara efficiently and brutally, repelling even the most prepared adventuring parties. At the castle, she has squads of the baron's dread Black Leopard guards at her command.

When outside of the castle, Lady Adeline uses her magic to vanquish anyone who opposes her or who tries to interfere with her draining of villagers. She uses her spell-like abilities to herd her opponents into a position where she can inflict as much pain and suffering as possible before she finishes them off.

Lady Adeline prefers to assault her victims from many directions at once. For instance, she turns a bunch of *sticks to snakes* at their feet, and as the heroes deal with them, she then commands giant ants to attack them from behind, while simultaneously attacking them at range with her long bow.

If the heroes manage to retreat, Lady Adeline changes into her wild eagle form and spies on them, taking pleasure in turning their own words against them.

If cornered in a desperate melee, Lady Adeline pulls aside her veil, revealing her repulsive looks, requiring the heroes to successfully save vs. paralyzation. In the event that Adeline is losing, she can *shapechange* into one of her eagle forms and fly away or touch a plant and transport herself to safety.

Maze of Thorns

This adventure is for four to six heroes of levels 6–9 (about 40 total levels). All adventurers should be well equipped with magical weapons and items to have a chance to survive. This is a high-powered and potentially deadly adventure. It works well as a lesson to challenge heroes who consider themselves invincible. The adventure can take place in any domain.

Background

Lady Adeline recently defeated a very powerful adventuring party that tried to get into Castle Pantara during the day, handing three survivors over to Von Kharkov. He was so pleased that he arranged for her to "vacation" in a nearby domain for a few months. He only asked that no one be killed and that she restrict her sport to an outlying village.

Accompanied by two of the baron's Black Leopard guards, Adeline traveled to a forested area just north of a small, isolated village. Amidst the trees and dense foliage, Adeline has used her magical abilities to fashion a maze. Her primary coffin lies at the edge of the maze, surrounded by thorns and the Black Leopard guards. She also keeps a spare coffin hidden in a ravine about a half mile east of the maze, which she can access using her ability to travel through plants.

Adeline has been preying on the parties of villagers who go into the forest to gather mushrooms and berries, which grow abundantly within the north woods.

As the adventure starts, a number of villagers have gone gathering in the woods and returned days later, scarred and dazed, their baskets empty. Few enter the woods now, and no one returns unharmed.

The Adventure Begins

The heroes enter a small farming village of about 200 people. The village has about 30 wattle and daub houses, a small wine press, a granary, and several farms surrounding the area. The flour mill is powered by a waterwheel.

The villagers seem peaceful and friendly. The most striking aspect of this town is that a good 10% of the villagers feature fresh scars and deformities. By talking with villagers, the heroes discover the following facts: Elaine Freely, once admired for her flashing green eyes, inspires only pity now that she is blind in one eye from a deep cut. Livid welts furrow the alabaster cheeks of Maggie Brownell, last season's harvest queen. Once the strongest boy in the village, Billy Appleby now nurses a crippled, misshapen left leg.

Furthermore, many people seem oddly listless. For instance, Frigdeth O'Malley, the village mayor, tries to break up a fight between two villagers, commanding them with a voice as weak as a whining puppy. Both villagers turn on the man, pummeling him to the ground. He gets up, apologizes for interrupting them, and shuffles off, crying and sniffling. His chin and jawline scars look like a bobcat gouged them.

Invent other examples of scarred looks and personalities as you desire to paint a picture of town where something is definitely wrong.

One villager tells about Peter Karin, the most daring boy in the village, who came wandering back to town, dazed and subdued. His handsome face was ruined by long, jagged cuts. He remembers nothing. Peter now sits in his father's mill, listlessly tending the grinding wheel.

Alarmed by Peter's condition, a group of villagers armed themselves and set off for the forest to discover that nature of the odd attack. One by one, the people returned, acting distracted and lethargic, and each favoring some kind of scar or deformity.

Enter the Maze

If asked, a villager tells the heroes that all of the altered people went north into the forest and returned days later changed. However, he urges the heroes to turn south instead, saying that nothing good can come of going north. If the heroes pledge to rid the village of the unknown menace, the man sighs and slowly walks away.

The forest north of town is dense and lush. A dark canopy of tree branches blocks out the sunlight. Wild mushrooms pepper the moist forest floor. Here and there bushes flame with brightly colored berries. The heroes must use their swords to cut a path through the underbrush.

Without warning, the thick foliage gives way to a narrow pathway. The path ends at the entrance of a wide thorn bush maze.

If the heroes try to look at the maze from above using magical flight or bird companions, they see only a rambling thorny maze some 50 yards square. The surveillance is cut short by an attack from a flock of wild eagles (Lady Adeline in bird form and the eagles she has summoned).

Eagle, wild (5d6): AC 6; MV 1; FL 30 (C); hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1; SZ Small (4'–5'); Int Animal (1); ML Average (9); AL N; XP 175 each.

If the heroes try to turn back from the maze entrance, they are attacked by a giant ant. Unknown to the party, Adeline uses her wall of thorns to block off any retreat as well, forcing the heroes into her maze.

Through the Maze

The maze contains a series of traps, some built into the maze already, others waiting to be triggered by Adeline herself as she follows her prey by traveling through plants and using her eagle form. Adeline designed her traps to separate unsuspecting parties so that she can drain each member individually. The heroes should survive the traps if they make a strong effort to stick together. If a single hero gets lost in the maze and Lady Adeline notices, read the boxed text below to that hero's player.

> A slight rustle stirs behind you. A short, shapely female emerges from the dying husk of a thorn bush. Her well-defined muscles gleam palely in the afternoon light. She wears a shiny black, form-fitting garment, and a veil covers her entire face. Her fine, blond hair reaches down to her shoulders. A quiver of arrows and a long bow rest on her back, and a long sword and dagger hang at her belt. She wears a sturdy pair of leather gloves on her pale hands.
>
> "Come to me, fight me, struggle against the destiny I hold for you. Yes, struggle. But know that you are mine now. Look on the face of your future!"

Adeline tears aside her veil. The hero must make a horror check and then successfully save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. If the elf vampiress wins, she attacks the hero, scarring the person permanently in whatever way you find appropriately horrific. Work with the player to choose a

deformity he can role-play with compelling angst. In the event that the hero is not paralyzed, Lady Adeline fights the individual until he or she is incapacitated.

Upon hearing anyone else coming, Adeline touches a plant, transporting to another part of the maze. The plant she uses whithers and dies instantly.

If the adventurers travel through the maze at night, they can pass unharmed through any traps that require Adeline to set them off.

However, as they get closer to the edge of the maze (area 8), the chance of running into a patrolling were-panther guard increases. At night, there is a one in eight chance per turn that the were-panther smells or hears them and attacks. This chance gets progressively better (on the second turn, the panther arrives on a roll of 1 or 2 on d8; on the third turn, a roll of 1–3 on d8, and so on). If the heroes make a lot of noise anywhere in the maze, the chance of their activity attracting the were-panther is measured by rounds, rather than turns.

1a. Covered Pit: To the west, the path is 2 feet wide. The ground is littered with dead leaves and branches. A slender sapling rises out of the debris in the center of the pathway. Concealed under the leaves is a pit trap. The sides of the trap are angled and muddy, designed to cause a victim to slide into the pit and fall against spikes planted at the bottom, causing 1d6 + 3 hp damage (avoid by successfully saving vs. paralyzation). The sapling is mounted on the end of a vertical spike in the center pit.

1b. Snake Burrow: The path to the east is narrow, but passable. Thorns join over the heads of the heroes here. Gradually the thorn ceiling gets lower and lower until the heroes are forced to stoop or crawl to continue (those over 6 feet in height must crawl). Sticks snap and crackle under foot. When all of the adventurers have entered the burrow area, Adeline casts *sticks to snakes*.

2. Log Attack: The maze closes to single file width. The thorn walls of the maze are thinner here; the heroes can just barely see sunlight or moonlight through them. Vines cover the walkway, breaking on the heroes' boots as they walk through. One of the vines—a trip wire—releases a heavy, spiked log on a rope, which swings down from a tree into the last party member, causing 2d20 points of damage (successfully save vs. paralyzation for half damage).

3a. Entanglements: The east path is clear and appears the safest of the three options. Lady Adeline uses this area to trap victims using her *entangle* spells. If she is otherwise engaged, the path holds no other horrors.

3b. No Way Out: The north path is narrow and reveals a curve a few feet off. The maze again creates a canopy over the sides of the path. Once the adventurers enter, Lady Adeline casts a *wall of thorns* over the entrance, sealing the victims in a thorn-covered box so that she can return for them later.

3c. Wolf Pen: After taking the right fork in the east path, the way is dense and weaves back and forth for some time. After a while, a low whimpering fades in and out of hearing. The thorns grow thickly across the path, but weapons easily slice through them. The whimpering gives way to growling as the adventurers encounter a pack of wolves (3d6 mentally summoned and trapped by Lady Adeline earlier).

Wolves (3d6): AC 7; MV 18; hp 15 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg d4+1; SD +1 bonus to saving throws vs. spell; SZ Small (3'-4' long); ML Average (10); Int Low (6); AL N; XP 120 each.

4. Cage of Thorns: The path takes a couple of turns then opens into an alcove to the southwest.

A young girl dressed in tatters lies motionless in a cage of thorns. Her legs and arms are crusted with blood from numerous scratches. The girl needs at least a *cure light wounds* to regain consciousness.

If she awakens, she stares at her rescuer with a single, despairing eye. Her other eye has been blinded by a series of brutal cuts.

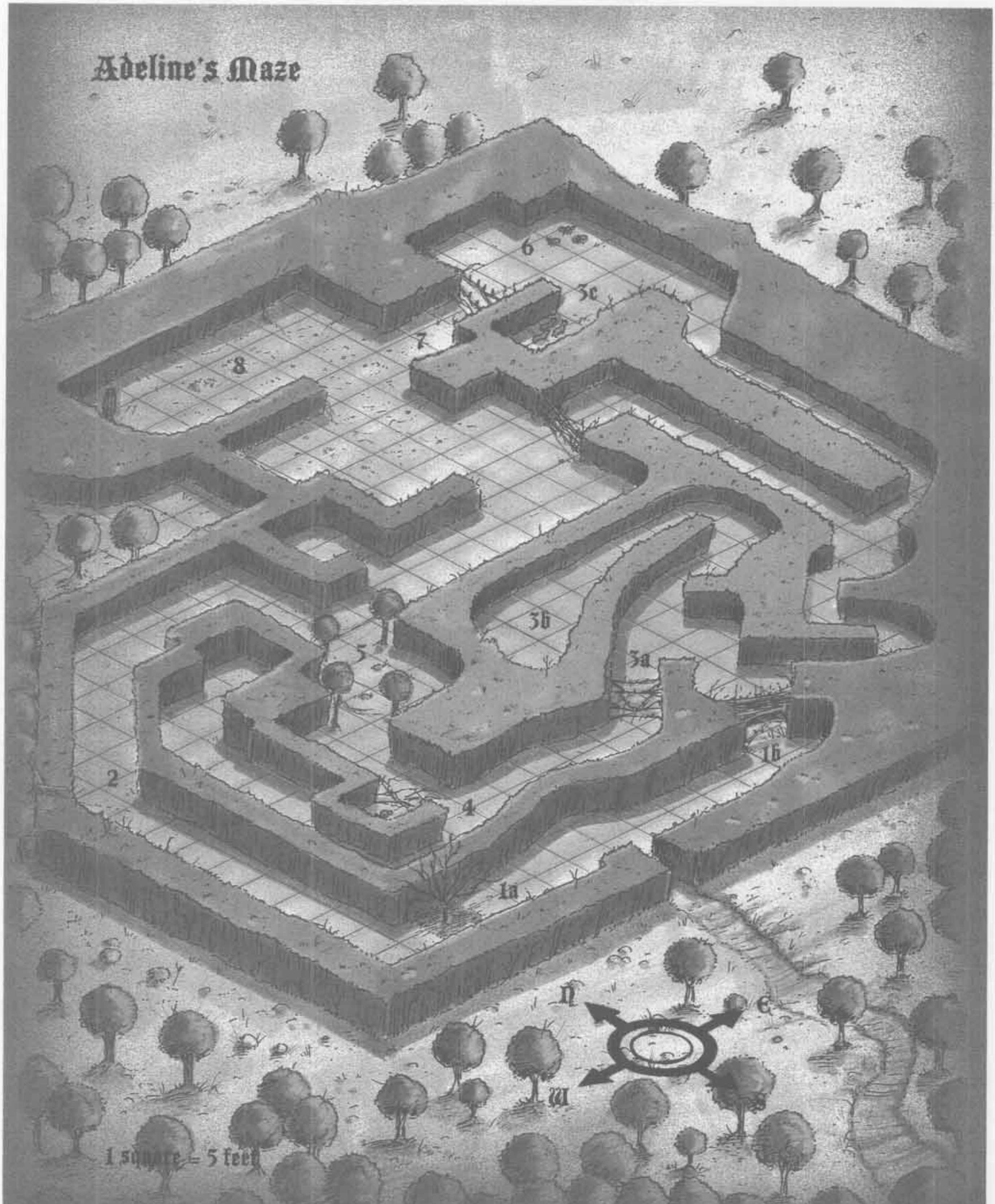
All she says is her name—Leah. She drinks and eats if offered food, but does so very weakly despite her obvious hunger and thirst. As she seems afraid to move, a hero must carry the girl out to rescue her.

Leah, peasant, human female: AC 10; MV 12; hp 3; THAC0 20; SZ Small (4' tall); ML Unsteady (7); AL NG.
S 5, D 9, C 5, I 10, W 8, Ch 5.

5. Snare Trap: This area of the maze is lined with trees interwoven with a thin layer of thorns. Vines hang thickly from the branches and trail through the leaves. All who enter have a chance (10%, unless using magical assistance) to avoid stepping in one of the snares here. If a snare is triggered, the victim is jerked upward and suspended about 4 feet above the ground by the ankle. If Adeline is available, she shoots arrows into dangling victims for sport.

6. Giant Insects: Blocking the exit of this corridor is a host of giant warrior ants, which attack as soon as the heroes are in sight.

Ant, giant (1d6): AC 3; MV 18; hp 15; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6/3d4; SZ Medium; Int Animal (1); ML Average (9); AL N; XP 175 each.


Adeline's Maze
6
3c
7
8
3b
5
3a
1b
2
4
1a
N
E
W
1 square = 5 feet

7. Spike Growth: Once the heroes stand completely within this corridor, Adeline surrounds them with *spike growth* on all sides. For each 10 feet of movement through the area, each hero suffers 2d4 points of damage. If a hero fails a saving throw vs. spell, his or her movement is reduced by one-third for 24 hours.

8. The Edge of the Maze: Across the entrance to the edge of the maze lie a series of trip wires concealed under dead leaves. The trip wires ring a string of tiny bells, alerting the were-panthers and Lady Adeline to intruders. Leaves, vines, and dead branches litter the area. Thorns grow thickly everywhere. During the day, two guards (in panther form) sleep out of sight in trees on either side of the concealed coffin. They awaken instantly at any loud noise.

Were-panthers (2): AC 2; MV 12; hp 35 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+2 (*mace +1*), 1d4+1 (long knife); SA Lycanthropy, *shapechanging*; SD Struck only by magical or silver weapons; SZ Medium (5', 8"); ML Elite (14); Int High (16); XP 650 each, new monster.

Panther form: AC 6; MV 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA Rear claws 1d6+1/1d6+1; SD Surprised only on a 1.

In the northwestern corner of the area lies Lady Adeline's coffin, concealed under a thick and twisted layer of thorns. Heroes must first find a way to detect the coffin, and then destroy the thorns to get access to the lid.

Any disturbance around her coffin awakens Lady Adeline. From inside, she immediately issues a mental call for up to 3d6 wolves to come to her aid. Six wolves arrive in seven rounds (this pack ranges nearby) while the remainder, if any, arrive in 1d6 turns.

Once the heroes uncover and open the coffin, they find a *continual light* spell has been cast on the inside of the coffin. (The *light* spell not only allows her to rest comfortably, but it enables Adeline to be active at night if her coffin is opened.) At first, Adeline remains still as if sleeping. As soon as someone tries to harm her, she suddenly tears aside her veil and rasps out, "Is this what you were looking for?" Heroes who are looking in the coffin must make a horror check and successfully save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.

Next, Adeline leaps up and fights the heroes until more summoned wolves arrive to help. Should the heroes manage to push Adeline out of her coffin and snap the lid shut, or cast a *continual darkness* on the light, the darkness causes her 1d4 damage per round, which does not regenerate in the dark. Once this happens, Adeline stops fighting and does everything she can to open the coffin again. After losing half her hit points, Adeline flees by touches a plant, and traveling to her spare coffin, located in a ravine to the east.

If they attack her coffin during the day, Lady Adeline does everything within her power to protect her coffin. Unless the heroes know the nature of Adeline's vampirism and how to combat it, they are unable to defeat Adeline. Instead she drives the heroes back into her maze, either killing them or forcing them to retreat. She fights until dusk, then disappears by touching a plant and taking refuge in her spare coffin.

After about three days of unsuccessful fighting, Adeline collapses the maze and returns to Valachan.

Recurrence

Lady Adeline is not designed to be destroyed in the first encounter. She can reappear at any time in any domain on another "vacation" with a new maze and a new set of victims. If you want to detach Adeline from Von Kharkov, she can wander the Mists looking for victims.

Start incorporating clues to her weaknesses in each subsequent adventure so that, in time, the heroes can defeat her. For example, within a future maze, you could set up an encounter with a young fighter who is exhausted but basically unharmed when the heroes find him. They can notice a ring of fresh flower petals surrounding him, which he discovered kept the vampire warrior at bay.

You might also have Lady Adeline hunt the heroes to punish them for ruining her maze and rescuing her prey. As a hunter, Adeline shadows the heroes in her wild eagle form, waiting for an opportunity to ambush them. Once she finds them in a difficult position, perhaps fighting another monster, she enters the melee, using her magical abilities and cunning to disfigure them. When she hunts, she has a retainer travel a half-day's journey behind her and her prey with a coffin for her rest.

Stress that fighting Lady Adeline in Valachan, however, is foolhardy, since there she can rely upon Von Kharkov's vast resources as well as her own.

The Dying is one of the finest operas to date by the esteemed Don Pablo. It tells the tragic story of two lovers torn apart by the jealousy of another. The scene when the hero throws himself on his love's grave is particularly poignant—though I confess a bit morbid for my tastes!

—Lord Abernathy.
as told at the salon of Lady DeForest

Don Pablo

Biography

Don Pablo is a vorlog, a creature detailed in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix III.* All vital statistics are repeated in this chapter.

Appearance

Pablo is a devilishly handsome, 6-foot-tall man who favors light gray, three-piece suits stylishly accented with black trim. His stockings are pale gray and he wears black shoes with silver buckles. He carries a black hardwood cane with a silver handle as a decorative accessory.

He is clean shaven, with a chin as smooth as a porcelain bowl. Although in his mid-thirties, Pablo has dark hair already starting to turn gray. His clear light blue eyes sparkle intensely. Like most concert pianists, he possesses long, strong fingers.



Don Pablo

Vorlog, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	3	Str	18/76
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	13
Hit Points	36	Int	14
THAC0	15	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	18
Morale	11	XP	3,000

Damage/Attack: 1d6+4
Special Attacks: *Charm*, plus see text.
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, plus see text.
Special Weaknesses: Suffers 1d6 points of damage per round of direct exposure to sun.

Only a mortal in the final stage of an interrupted transformation into a vampiric bride or groom (see *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*, 9345) can become a vorlog. Physically, vorlogs appear no different from human beings, save for budding fangs that show when the creature speaks. They still live, so priests, garlic, and mirrors affect them as they would any normal human. While vorlogs can roam around during the day, exposure to sunlight inflicts 1d6 hit points damage per round.

Nonetheless, they do acquire some of the benefits of their vampiric creators. Vorlogs possess superhuman strength (18/76) and an immunity to poison, *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells. Additionally, they are able to *charm* victims. The power relies on making the victim feel tremendous pity and sympathy for the vorlog, inspiring him or her with a desire to protect it from further harm. Once the creature starts feeding off the victim's spiritual energies, the victim becomes convinced that the vorlog loves him or her, and will do everything possible to remain near its protective embrace.

Vorlogs also have a limited ability to control animals within 50 feet of their location. They can telepathically reach out and "touch" the creature's mind, causing it either to flee (50% chance) or to violently attack the nearest creature (50% chance).

Indeed, vorlogs are piteous creatures. They are condemned to an endless and fruitless search for their lost loves, since they seek someone just like their slain vampiric mate. A vorlog temporarily seizes upon a "living surrogate" who reminds it of its lost love, but soon realizes that the person is not a perfect image of that love. It grows to resent the person, killing the surrogate out of frustration, then continues to search for its "real" love.

This cycle of desire, love, and destruction is what makes the vorlog truly monstrous.

Don Pablo

Background

Don Pablo, Senior, was one of the most beloved pianists and composers in the land, and Don Pablo followed in his father's footsteps flawlessly. Due to his early success, Don Pablo never has to worry about money. He lives in a grand two-story townhouse he inherited from his father. This wealth and security allows Pablo to devote himself completely to his art.

As a young man, Pablo rose to the top of the music world, performing his works in packed concert halls, and on appointment writing compositions for the rich and powerful.

Pablo's music was brilliant and passionate. He attracted many talented divas with his heartbreaking operettas. He spent much of his early career writing for Alicia Montenegro, a talented but vain singer. He later turned her out, when he could no longer tolerate her tempestuous demands.

A little over a year ago, while performing his latest sonata, Pablo drew the attention of a female vampire named Lynette. She was awed by the haunting, dark beauty of Pablo's music. At a private performance, she *charmed* Pablo into allowing her to sing with him. Her ability and beauty won Don Pablo's instant admiration. For weeks thereafter they were always seen with each other, strolling through parks after dark and dining at the city's finest restaurants. It was not long before Lynette's sincerity as an artist and her gentleness won Pablo's heart.

Gradually, Lynette revealed her true nature and finally offered him the bond of vampiric matrimony. While initially repulsed by her nature, Don Pablo could not resist the chance to compose forever in the company of the woman he loved.

The pair began the process of turning Pablo into a vampire. As they lay next to each other—Lynette helpless and weak from the effort of infusing him with her blood—the door to the room burst open and in strode Alicia and three men. Two of the men held weapons ready while the third grasped a mallet and stake. Pointing to Lynette, Alicia shrieked, "There! That's her! Do it quickly!"

The man with the stake pounced on Lynette and slammed the sharpened point into her heart. Pablo tried to stop him, but the other two men held him back, while Alicia stared, triumphant and flushed. She drew up to Pablo, and gently pressed a holy symbol against his brow. When she saw no reaction on his dark skin, she theatrically declared, "Thank all that is good! We were not too late. Don Pablo is saved."

As they removed Lynette's head and filled the mouth with holy wafers, Alicia fawned over Pablo,



consoling him and explaining in patronizing tones how close he had come to becoming undead. Pablo was too shocked by Lynette's death to reply.

After Alicia left, Pablo fell to his knees and wailed with rage. He had changed—he had become a vorlog, a creature that was almost, but not quite, a vampire. Doomed to an existence that revolves around trying to recapture the sense of bonding he felt with Lynette, he cursed Alicia's interference bitterly.

Personality

Pablo feels as though the death of his beloved Lynette has torn his very soul from his body. He is often severely depressed, and produces dark works, none of which he quite finishes.

When he used to perform in public, Pablo always made a very intense impression. His manner was suave and reserved, yet his eyes held a certain brightness, a passion.

Nowadays, Pablo rarely speaks, and when he does, he limits his replies to no more than five or six words—Pablo worries that someone might notice his budding vampiric incisors.

Combat

If faced with hostility, Pablo, who has always shunned the use of weapons, tries his charm ability first. Victims must successfully save vs. spell or feel an overwhelming sense of pity for the musician. Another of his nonviolent tactics is to touch the minds of any beasts nearby, hoping to cause them to attack, allowing him to escape.

If forced into combat, he fights with his cane for at least two rounds. The cane inflicts 1d6+4 hit points of damage, due to Pablo's 18/76 Strength. After that, he throws the cane aside and uses powerful backhand slaps. Each hit requires a saving throw vs. spell. Failure results in a temporary loss of 2 points of Wisdom, regained at the rate of 1 point per hour.

Pablo regenerates one hit point per hour unless in the presence of his current surrogate; if she is there, the vorlog regenerates one hit point per round.

The Victim

This adventure is for three to five heroes, each level 4–5 (about 20 levels total). It is recommended that the adventuring party include at least one female hero. Otherwise, one or more of the heroes should have a connection to a young woman (either directly or as a close friend of the family) who lives in Don Pablo's town.

Background

One night, Pablo dreamt of Lynette standing in the fog, beckoning to him. He knew that he had to find her again. To facilitate his search, Pablo decided to resume performing. His friends and admirers are delighted. He has been engaged to play at the Winter Festival in his town. The celebration promises to be the event of the season.

Pablo has spread the word that he has decided to take on students and that he will select a protégé at the Winter Festival.

Once Pablo has found his "love," he will *charm* her, then isolate her from her friends and family by spiriting her off to his home. He keeps the doors locked at all times (to prevent intruders such as those who killed Lynette) and the windows shuttered (to block out the sunlight, which does hurt him a little). Pablo even has meals delivered to the house, so that his guest need never leave.

The Adventure Begins

The adventurers receive an invitation to the Winter Festival from a family member or friend. They arrive to find the town decked out for the lavish Winter Festival. Sheltered candles glow from each doorway. Thick fir branches and red-berried holly hang between the buildings, linking the entire town in a spirit of festivity.

The invitation directs them to the wealthy section of town, where each house is decorated more extravagantly than the next, as if it were a contest. One house defies the tradition, and sits unadorned and dark. The path to the door is unkempt and all of the windows are shuttered day and night. A townperson says the house belongs to the great composer Don Pablo. If asked why the man neglects his home, the woman shrugs and moves on.

The heroes arrive at their friend's house. A lovely young woman in a fur-trimmed white cloak greets them, introducing herself as Lara, the daughter of their host. She immediately attaches herself to the arm of the handsomest hero and escorts him inside, chatting amiably. Once inside, they are greeted heartily by the friend or family member who sent the invitation.

Their host invites the heroes to an evening party at the mayor's home. Lara breathlessly announces that Don Pablo will perform, saying that his music is beyond compare. The host offers the heroes proper evening clothes, if they have none among their belongings.

Lara endears herself to the heroes, asking questions about their adventures. She is genuinely interested in their stories and appears eager and curious, yet intelligent and refined.

After dusk, the host and his family prepare two carriages and invite the heroes to ride to the mayor's home with them.

Scores of torches illuminate the house's courtyard. Footmen stand ready to assist the alighting guests. In the entry way, elegantly dressed people chatter as they await an escort. The green and gold rosettes on the stewards' shoulders glitter among the throng as they lead guests into the grand hall for the concert.

A beautifully polished grand piano stands on a raised platform in the front of the hall.

The Seduction

Precisely at midnight, a tall, striking man strides across the stage and takes his place in front of the piano. The hall immediately falls silent in anticipation. Lara leans over toward the heroes and whispers ecstatically, "Don Pablo!"

> With a slight, predatory grin, Don Pablo begins to play. The passion of the music engulfs the room, instantly silencing any shuffling or conversations.
> The room drops from view as the music paints a tragic story of love, betrayal, and madness. Don Pablo attacks the keys with a manic ferocity.
> The audience seems to hold its breath in anticipation of the climactic ending.
> As the final note fades into nothing more than an echo, people leap to their feet in an ovation. The room resounds with clapping and cheering.

Everyone the heroes speak to considers Pablo's performance magnificent—the work of an unquestionable master.

After the performance, the guests enter a large ballroom. At the far end of the ballroom lies a smaller room set up with a late-night buffet of light pastries and fruit.

At some point, the mayor introduces Don Pablo to the heroes and their host. The virtuoso bows to each man in turn, and tenderly kisses the hand of any female heroes present (focusing his continued attentions on the one with the highest Charisma). Otherwise, he fixates on Lara.

Don Pablo asks the object of his gallantry to dance, charmingly refusing to take "no" for an answer. A flawless dancer, Don Pablo whisks the woman across the dance floor, away from the rest of the party. His goal is to maneuver her onto a secluded balcony and *charm* her into being his companion. He pursues her until he succeeds. (If he fails to *charm* his target tonight, Pablo visits her every evening—inviting her to ride in the park, walk by the lake, etc.—until he wins her affection.)

Once *charmed*, the woman does not leave Pablo's side willingly. She hangs on his every word and extols his virtues to anyone who will listen. She appears radiant and very happy. If the heroes try to detach her from Pablo, the pianist smiles, and states ardently that his heart would die without her presence to sustain it.

You should take aside the player whose character is the object of Pablo's ardor and explain how to act. Stress that she should play along even if she wants her companions to rescue her.

Right before the evening ends, the woman and Pablo slip away to his house. Should the heroes try to intercede, the woman adamantly tells the heroes to leave her alone. If provoked, she quits the group and announces her intention to marry Pablo. (In the event that the woman is Lara, her father—delighted over such a brilliant match—gives his consent.)

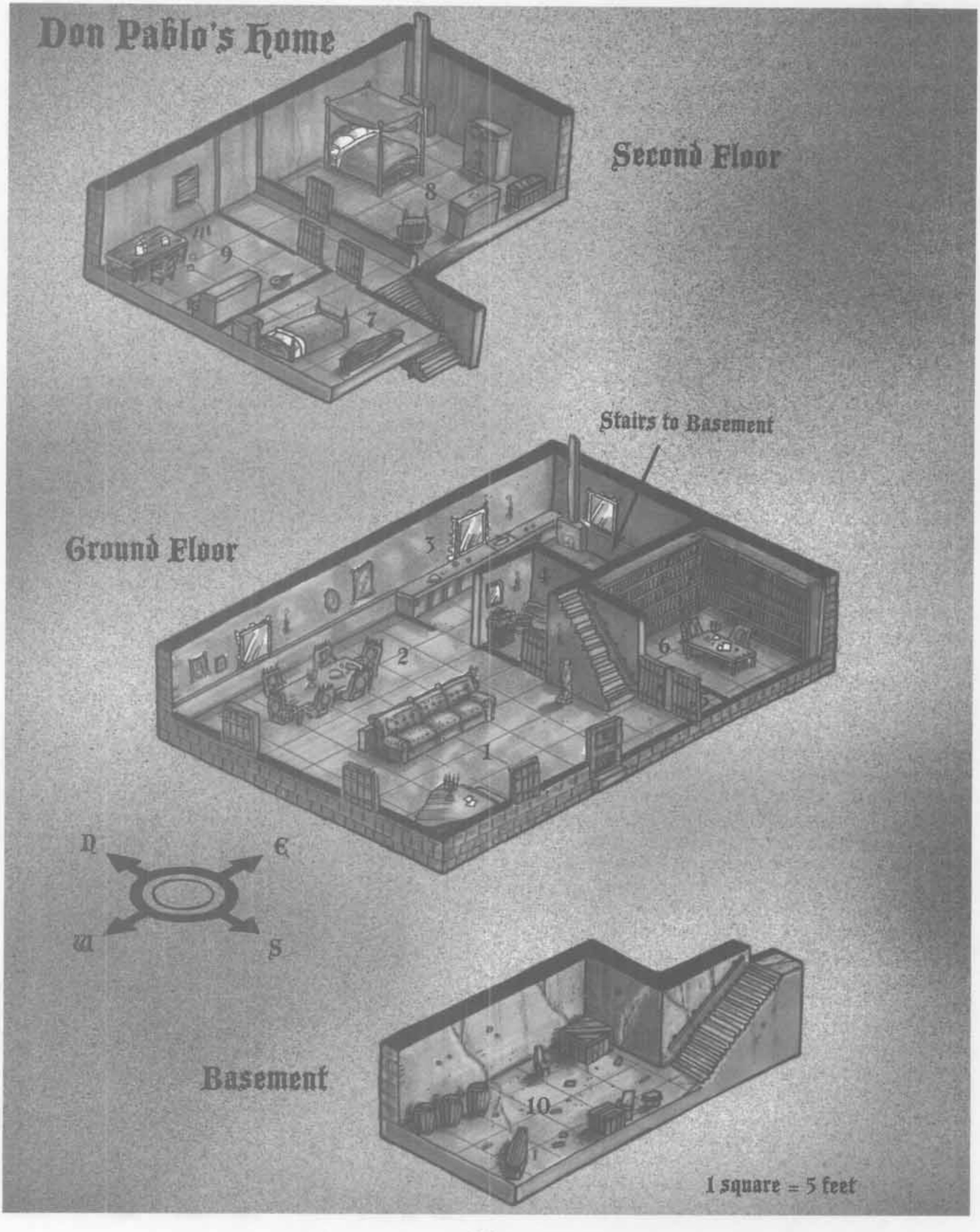
If the heroes try to pursue the couple that evening, their host (and friend) stops them. He suggests that it is late and they should talk to their friend the next day.

Persistent heroes should go directly to the description of *Don Pablo's Home*.

The Sudden Suitor

During the day, the heroes may ask any number of people about their friend's new beau, Don Pablo. To determine how much information a townsperson gives, have the hero roll 2d8 and check the Information list on page 55, adding or subtracting the interrogating adventurer's Reaction Adjustment. (Results equal to or less than zero means the local pretends to know nothing. Each 10 gp bribe offered equals +1 Reaction Adjustment.) The list is cumulative, so a result of five




Don Pablo's Home
Second Floor
8
9
7
Stairs to Basement
Ground Floor
3
4
2
6
1
N
E
W
S
Basement
10
1 square = 5 feet

means the hero gets all the information up to that point on the list.

Alternately, heroes can obtain these details by using an information gathering proficiency.

Feel free to add whatever other information you deem appropriate. The heroes might want to follow up on some of the clues they uncover, by visiting Alicia or the cook, for instance.

If they visit Alicia, she acts overly polite and bitingly sarcastic. While stunningly beautiful, Alicia has an almost feral look in her eyes that ruins her overall appearance. She speaks highly of Pablo, and even more highly of herself, citing her dismissal as Pablo's greatest mistake. She offers to sing for the heroes. If they listen to her and praise her talent, she graciously answers their questions.

Information

Roll 2d8, adding or subtracting Reaction Adjustment

2–4	A description of Don Pablo.
5	Last night was Don Pablo's first performance in a long while. He used to perform a lot and take students. His father was a great musician.
6–7	Don Pablo has worked with a number of divas over the years. One of them, Alicia Montenegro still lives in town at a room above the White Dove.
8–10	Don Pablo always performs at night. He never leaves town day or night, except to go to and from his concerts.
11–12	Don Pablo pays an old woman to deliver evening meals every day right after sundown. She often finds them uneaten the next day.
13–14	He stopped playing after his diva, Lynette, disappeared some months ago. At the time, people were certain that the couple would marry.
15–16	Lynette looked a lot like the current object of Pablo's interest (use same description). They could be twins.
17–19	Alicia, his former diva, has threatened Pablo in public. She was very angry when he forced her to leave him.
20+	Some sell-swords claim to have saved Don Pablo's life from a vampire once, around the time his most recent diva vanished. No one knows their names or where they can be found now.

Don Pablo's Home

Eventually, the heroes should approach Don Pablo's house—mostly likely in search of their missing friend who left with Pablo earlier.

Pablo's two-story brick townhouse appears vacant. Pablo keeps the widows shuttered and the doors locked both during day and at night. If the heroes knock, no one answers the door. They must break in to enter.

1. Entry Way/Living Room: Stuffed couches, fine paintings and delicate sculptures—the finest money can buy—and a grand piano are the main features of this room. There are eight works of art, worth a total of 1,500 gp. Sorrowful piano music sounds faintly from upstairs.

2. Dining Room: In this beautifully decorated dining room, a long mahagony table stands set with finely crafted china and silverware bearing musical symbols. A meal for one of tomato bisque, roast beef, and carrots still steams warmly. Next to the plate is a glass of red wine, half drunk. The china is worth 200 gp and the silver 500 gp.

3. Kitchen: On the spotless counter, under a silver dome, sits an untouched plate of roast beef and carrots. The pantry holds no supplies. (No food is prepared here, since vorlogs eat only one-tenth of what normal humans require.) A local woman delivers meals at sunset.

4. Privy: This room contains a porcelain basin and a silver-edged mirror.

5. Closet: A rich assortment of dusty overcoats and fancy hats hangs inside. The *charmed* woman's outer clothing hangs here as well.

6. Library: This collection of books and bound sheet music was started by Pablo's grandfather. The books include a smattering of fiction mixed among texts on musical theory and composition. There are 40 volumes in the room, each worth 1d100 gp to a buyer with an interest in music.

7. Guest Bedroom: This richly furnished bed-chamber is covered in dust. A coffin rests against one wall.

Your friend (or Lara), clothed in a black, high-necked dress, struggles with Alicia on the bed. Both women have tears in their gowns. A splash of blood lies at the corner of your friend's mouth.

Alicia screams, "Help me, please!! She is a vampire! Help me. I don't want to die! Kill her. Kill her quickly!"

Alicia does everything she can to make the other woman appear to be the aggressor in the fight. She uses her acting ability to appear terrified. Alicia points to the coffin as proof. (The coffin is actually Lynette's. Don Pablo left the room just as it was when Lynette died.)

Hysterical and confused, Pablo's love fights anyone who nears her, clawing and biting. She is senseless until subdued (a product of Alicia's murder attempt and Pablo's *charm*.)

If the heroes slay the woman without checking to see if she is a vampire first, they need to make powers checks and horror checks when they realize they have just killed a defenseless woman (their friend, no less).

Should the heroes talk to her, they notice an angry red mark on the side of the woman's pale neck, but no signs that she herself is a vampire. If the heroes try to convince her that Pablo is a vampire and must be killed, she begs them to spare his life, shrieking, "He loves me and I love him! He's not the monster you think he is! He's kind and gentle! Please, don't kill him!"

While the heroes are dealing with the woman, Alicia runs to tell Pablo that his love is being slain. After a while, the heroes hear a yell of anguish and rage from down the hall.

8. Master Bedroom: This room features a huge canopied bed, an overstuffed chair, a large fireplace, and a chest of drawers. In one of the drawers is a diamond cravat pin (1,000 gp), a set of diamond cuff links (250 gp), and a silver bracelet (45 gp).

Down the hall, Pablo shouts angrily, "No, not again! I will not allow it! Not again! I will kill you first!"

"Too late, Pablo," Alicia says. "Admit it, you need me. I am the only woman who should sing by your side!"

"You vain little fool! Lynette was and ever will be your better. She was a perfect diamond, you are merely cracked glass!"

9. Study: Don Pablo works on his compositions here. The room contains another piano and a variety of other musical instruments, including a lute and a set of wooden pipes. Against one wall sits a desk, which is cluttered with musical drafting paper, pens, ink, and a metronome. Inside a locked desk drawer are Pablo's financial papers, including 15 receipts for bank deposits totaling 13,900 gp.

Don Pablo and Alicia stand near a large, boarded-up window.

"Do you like me to sully my hands, when I could offer you caresses? How many more of these simpering, weak fools will I have to kill before you'll acknowledge the mistake you made in letting me go?" she shouts.

"You killed Lynette just to deprive me of her, didn't you?"

Alicia grins.

The heroes must determine which of these two to help. Although Don Pablo has shown an unhealthy interest in their friend and might yet be a vampire, Alicia has confessed to murder and, mostly likely, was trying to kill their friend a few minutes ago.

If the heroes hesitate, the scene continues.

A look of torment and white-hot anger contorts Pablo's handsome face. Alicia starts laughing. The pianist roars and lunges at her, placing his hands around her slim neck. Alicia struggles ineffectually against him.

If the heroes don't intervene, Pablo strangles Alicia in three rounds.

Standing by and letting a murder happen requires a powers check, even though the victim is herself a murderer (but there is only a 1% chance that the powers react).

If Pablo manages to kill Alicia, he then turns to the heroes, baring his budding fangs in hopes of intimidating them, and says, "I order you to leave my house, or you will all share her fate."

Should the heroes attack Pablo, his current love places herself between him and his attackers, using any fighting skills she has to defend him.

Likewise, if Pablo releases Alicia to face the new threat, Alicia also defends Pablo, cursing the heroes and getting in their way. Her insanity drives her to defend Pablo even though he just tried to kill her.

Alicia Montenegro, human female: AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (fists); SZ Medium (5', 4"); ML Fanatic (17); AL CE.
S 9, D 18, Co 7, I 16, W 11, Ch 17.

In a fight with the heroes, Pablo first tries to *charm* his attackers. Heroes who fail to save vs. spell are *charmed*, and try to convince the others to pity Pablo, instead of attacking him.

Pablo, on the other hand, seizes his cane and fights ruthlessly against heroes who resist him. If a priest tries to use a holy symbol on Don Pablo, he grabs it, twists it like a piece of tin, and grinds it under his boot.

Remember that near his *charmed* surrogate, the vorlog regenerates one hit point per round.

When reduced to zero hit points, Don Pablo begins to weep and his entire body collapses into a pool of tears. They drip through cracks in the floor into his basement, and then flow into his coffin. If his coffin has been destroyed, the tears collect in a pool under a table, since vorlogs need only a dark place to rest.

10. Basement: Old furniture, barrels, boxes of old music, and an elegant mahogany coffin fill this shadowy basement. The ceiling and corners are draped with cobwebs.

Lynette bought the coffin as a wedding present for Don Pablo. It serves as his daytime resting place.

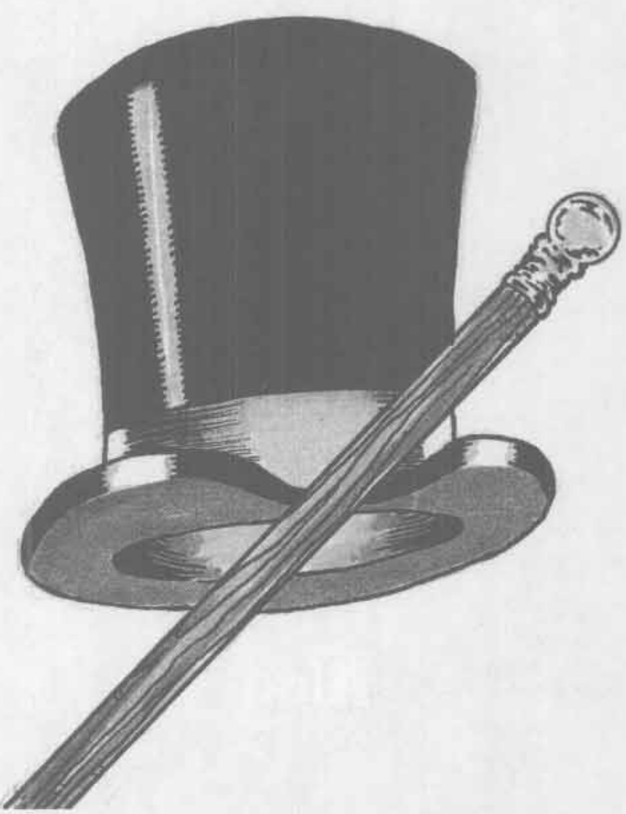
Recurrence

Don Pablo flees the city if he survives. He continues searching for a replacement for Lynette—failing each time. Eventually, word can reach the heroes of a series of murders, in which all the victims resembled Lynette.

Pablo might also become a wandering bard (leaving a trail of dead women behind him) in order to pursue the heroes he now views as his tormentors for having robbed him of his family legacy in his home town. As a bard, he plays either the lute or wooden pipes.

If the heroes destroy the vorlog or drive him away, the object of his interest starts to regain her wisdom and loses her bond with Don Pablo. For weeks, she continues to behave as though under the influence of a *confuse* spell, but eventually she recovers.

If Alicia survives, the heroes must decide whether to report her to the authorities—though since she has murdered only a vampire, they could just let her go.



Ah, the Knight of Cups is troubled,
his easy life shattered by
sudden oppression.
The Tower implies that he can gain
emancipation from his situation
if he is willing to accept change.
The Nine of Wands shows the way:
defiance is key to success.

—A tarokka reading by Madam Rosa

Alexi

Alexi

Biography

Alexi looks like a Vistana youth in his late teenage years. A fledgling vampire (according to Van Richten's classification), he has all the abilities and vulnerabilities of a vampire as detailed in the *Monstrous Manual* accessory.

Appearance

Alexi is of the Naiat tribe, which is part of the Vistani Boem tasque. He possesses a strong love of music and showmanship. Alexi wears black leather pants, boots, and vest, and a white shirt embroidered with colorful flowers. He wraps his dark hair in a red bandana, and his left ear sports a shiny gold earring. Alexi is in all ways a model Vistana.

A closer look, however, reveals that something is not quite right about him. His olive-hued skin seems a bit paler than most Vistani, and his brown eyes remain cold, even when he gives his most dazzling smile.

Alexi

Vampire Slave, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	1	Str	18/76
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	8+3	Con	14
Hit Points	35	Int	16
THAC0	13	Wis	10
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Morale	9	XP	3,000

Magic Resistance: 5%
Damage/Attack: 2d4 (bite).
Special Attacks: Poisonous saliva, *charm* (–3 penalty due to high Charisma).
Special Defenses: Regenerates 3 hp per round, +1 or better weapon needed to hit.

Background

The Vistana experienced an almost charmed boyhood, beloved by all. Being the only grandson of the raunie of his small tribe, Alexi was sheltered as a boy and encouraged only in the gentler pursuits, such as music and dance. At a young age, his music and songs were part of the caravan's traveling show. As he grew, Alexi's engaging smile and trim figure brought many a sigh from the girls who saw and heard him.

The only skills Alexi lacked were courage and fortitude—a flaw that led to tragedy for the young Vistana. While traveling from Borca and into Richemulot, the caravan made camp, and Alexi was



sent to fetch water from a nearby stream. On the far bank, a man lay bleeding. The man harshly ordered Alexi to help him, by carrying him across the river. When the gypsy lad got close, he saw in the dim moonlight that the man had extremely long fangs. Unarmed and afraid, Alexi panicked and ran away.

The vampire Runold was fleeing a pack of werewolves, who had injured him to the point that even in his bat form he was unable to fly. He viewed crossing the stream as his last hope. He counted on the werewolves to pass by, knowing that vampires cannot cross running water. Alexi's cowardice stranded Runold, leaving him easy prey for the werewolves, who tore him to shreds and forced the vampire to flee in *gaseous form*.

As he recovered, Runold fumed over the lack of respect shown by the youth. Enraged by what he considers a grave personal insult, Runold overcame his natural fear and respect for the Vistani and decided to exact revenge no matter what the cost.

A few nights later, Runold swooped down upon the caravan. The vampire assessed the tiny encampment, determining that if cornered he could likely vanquish the entire caravan without fear of the kind of retribution he would face from a larger Vistani group. Thus fortified, he abducted Alexi.

He drained all life from the boy, and within two days, Alexi arose as a fledgling vampire. Runold returned the youth to his people, charging them with the responsibility of keeping his new minion safe. In addition to threatening to destroy the caravan, the vampire declared himself part of their band, demanding the Vistani provide food for him. Alexi was so afraid for his family that he begged them to comply.

Madam Rosa, the raunie, was unable to refuse her grandson's pleas. Her heart, torn by the tragedy, now clings to the hope that some cure might save Alexi—if only she can find a way to kill Runold before her grandson feeds for the first time. She knows that Alexi would be banished even if cured, but her blind love considers that a better option than abandoning him to this cruel fate.

Madam Rosa hopes to find and hire an adventuring party to vanquish the vampire and save her darling Alexi.

Personality

A very impressionable young man, Alexi is easily swayed by strong opinions and strong personalities. While he detests his current situation, Alexi fears Runold too much to defy him. Alexi's woes have reduced his normally playful disposition to despondent fatalism; he is convinced he can do nothing to free himself or his people. Learning rather quickly that no one in the camp can resist his *charm* ability (except Madam Rosa, whom he would never try to *charm*), Alexi realizes the people who protected him all his life cannot save him now.

A consummate actor, Alexi can put on a mask of cheer and flirtation for performances, losing his worries in the music and dance. The Vistana joins the performances with an almost manic enthusiasm.

Combat

Even the smallest hint of violence strikes Alexi with fear. The mere sight of a weapon drawn in anger causes Alexi to cringe and flee the threat. He doesn't fear daggers used in a throwing contest, but someone challenging him or someone else to a duel will certainly scare him. If he cannot flee a fight, Alexi hides behind some stronger person (even his grandmother).

Alexi feels very unsure of his new abilities; however, his natural manner allows him to use his *charm* ability without thinking.

To Conquer Fear

This adventure is for three to five characters, levels 4–5 (about 20 levels). It can be set in any domain, even tied to *The Charnel House* on page 7. You should read that scenario before running this one. If you plan to link the two scenarios, the character of Nira should survive this adventure.

Background

This adventure takes place the first evening that the Vistani are to trap victims for Runold and Alexi. Time (at least to Madam Rosa) is of the essence, since Alexi has not yet fed. The Vistani caravan is set up just outside of town. Madam Rosa has sent one of the children to watch out for any traveling adventurers. She hopes to enlist a group to help her destroy Runold, by giving them clues through her cryptic fortunes. She hopes that killing Runold before Alexi feeds will free her grandson from the vampire's curse. (This is only the hope of an old woman blinded by love, since there is no cure for vampirism.)

If the heroes visit the Vistani during the evening, Madam Rosa sets them up as victims for Runold per the vampire's instructions, hoping they can vanquish the vampire during the confrontation.

Alexi does have the ability to overcome Runold, if only the youth can find the courage. Alexi can automatically surprise attack Runold (driving a stake through his heart, for instance), since the vampire seems convinced the boy is a complete coward. Madam Rosa is aware of this possibility, and tries to hint that inspiring Alexi to fight could save him and destroy Runold.

The other aspect of this adventure is Nira, a vampyre disguised as a human priestess. She is hunting Runold as part of a rite of passage ritual she must accomplish to gain favor with her vampyre clan. Her goal is to kill Runold and return with his head as her prize. Since vampyres appear mostly human, Nira allies herself with the heroes if they can help her with her goal. She claims to be a priestess of Ligra the Merciful (a fictitious sect). She wears a veil during combat to hide her fangs and fights with a mace. She also carries a number of *potions of extra-healing* to reinforce her disguise as a helpful cleric.

The Adventure Begins

While traveling through the forested wilderness, the heroes hear the sound of something large crashing through the underbrush. Among the trees, a veiled woman dressed in brown robes swings a mace at a pack of bears that nearly surrounds her. Her long, dark hair fans out around her as she spins, landing a solid blow that results in a loud crunch of bone. As the bear stumbles backward, she strikes it again. The woman limps severely from fresh injuries.

The bears growl and roar as she turns to face them

again, assuming a battle stance. "Back, you beasts! You will not stand between me and my quest!" she shouts.

The woman faces six bears, two of which she has hurt. Her left leg has been severely clawed.

Nira, vampyre: AC 4; MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6 ; SA Charming bite (victim must successfully save vs. poison or be *charmed*), –1 penalty to saving throw for each 2 points of damage, SZ Medium (5', 8" tall); ML Steady (12); AL CE; XP 3,000.
S 12, D 18, C 10, I 16, W 15, Ch 17.

Bears, brown (6): AC 7; MV 12; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA Hug; Int Low (6); SZ Medium (6', 2"); ML Average (10); AL N; XP 175 each.

Unaided, Nira fights for three rounds, then moves out of view. You might consider rewarding such base cowardice with a powers check at 1% each.

If the heroes assist her, the woman welcomes their aid, introducing herself as Nira.

Nira's Tale

Once the adventurers defeat the bears, Nira thanks them profusely, offering one or two of her healing potions to injured heroes.

She introduces herself as Nira Delamane, priestess of Ligra the Merciful, a neutral goddess. Nira pulls aside her veil. Her silky, black hair sharply contrasts with her exquisite, porcelain complexion. Nira appears about 30 years old.

Although she mentions that she is on a quest for her order, she omits the details, asking the heroes questions about their plans and adventures instead. When pressed about her quest, she says that she "sensed evil" in the woods nearby and while looking for it she noticed a Vistani caravan. As she approached the camp to get her fortune read, the bears suddenly attacked her. She asks the heroes to accompany her back to the camp. Nira expresses concern that the Vistani might somehow be involved with or in danger from the menace she sensed.

If the heroes challenge the plausibility of her story, she tentatively, as if puzzled herself, suggests that the evil presence might have disturbed the bears' natural routine, causing them to rampage.

An Invitation

The heroes can either go into town or directly approach the caravan. Either way, they encounter a young Vistana, who compliments them and offers them a discount on fortunes. To further entice the adventurers, he mentions that his caravan can trade such items as fresh herbs, new weapons, information, etc.



If the heroes go to the encampment, they see it is very small—one vardo and a couple of tents. The Vistani are preparing for their nightly show, lighting bonfires and setting up benches.

Madam Rosa sizes them up, deciding they are her best hope. She tries to pass information to them through fortunes or other cryptic, "Vistani" hints. If you are comfortable creating fortunes on the fly, you can use the tarokka cards in the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set to produce readings like the color text that begins this chapter. Alternatively, you might prepare a fortune-telling table like the one on page 17. Finally, Madam Rosa can mutter at individual heroes or take them aside for a "private reading." Feel free to create more cryptic Vistani hints in this vein as needed.

Whatever way you choose to deliver her information, Madam Rosa covers her need for help and cooperation ("Even fire needs water to make steam."), Alexi's cowardice and need for a real leader ("The butterfly can become brave when it has a wasp to follow."), the presence of a vampire ("Death rides the night air, swooping near."), and the suggestion that a newly turned vampire might be cured if he is rescued before he first feeds ("One who refuses the fruit of destruction may outrun the endless taint of death" or "A marriage is not sealed until the cake is sampled."). She finishes by hinting that the Vistani might not appear to help the heroes, but they will ("Bear in mind, help is near.").

After speaking with Madam Rosa, the heroes are escorted to the show by an attractive Vistana woman. Gawking villagers crowd the area. For three hours, the Vistani perform a show consisting of dazzling tumblers and acrobats, three nimble dancing bears that strut to fiddles, guitars, and tambourines, and a "magic" act where an old Vistana male uncannily figures out what people have in their pockets or pouches. The villagers seem awestruck.

Any adventurers who examine the bears find that they do not seem injured or winded in any way. In truth, one brown bear looks much like the other. Feel free to play coy about the coincidence of the gypsies having bears and of bears having attacked Nira.

At the end of the show, the Vistani invite people to dance in the torch light. One of the dancers, Alexi, asks any female hero to join him. He also performs knife tricks for the male heroes. Alexi bonds to the first person who resists his *charm* spell. He then spends the rest of the evening emulating that hero in every way.

Keep the tone light during this scene. Call for dancing proficiency checks: the Vistani applaud any hero who makes a dancing proficiency check by five points or more. (Use these rolls to conceal the saving throw vs. spell that Alexi's current partner must make to avoid being *charmed*. Note the result of that roll.)

After the dancing, the villagers start to leave, and several Vistani go among the people holding out tambourines to receive donations. Other Vistani flock around the heroes, praising them for being such graceful *giorgios*.

Meanwhile, handlers unmuzzle the bears, and additional Vistani approach from the vardos with vicious-looking hounds. (Allow heroes who expressly stated they are on their guard an Intelligence check—or heroes with alertness a proficiency check—to notice what's happening.)

After a few moments, Alexi states:

"Friends, I must ask you to keep your hands away from your weapons. It pains me to inform you that we must take you prisoner."

All the townsfolk are gone, and the laughing, merry faces of the gypsies now look hardened and grim. Each of them draws a wicked looking dagger or sword. The bears growl menacingly.

"Please forgive us," says the young Vistana, "for we have no choice in this."

A gale of laughter erupts, and the Vistani part for a pale, stout man in fine clothes, who escorts a reluctant Madam Rosa. The man's laughter fades and he says, "Oh, this is really too much. Alexi. When will you understand that these people are just food? Now stop your simpering, Alexi! Vistani, hold them!"

If no hero resists, Nira whips out her mace, striking the Vistana nearest her. Alexi lets out a cry and hides behind the vardo. The stout vampire shrieks in anger at Alexi, "Show some backbone, boy!" To the Vistani, he yells, "Subdue them!"

Any heroes who don't immediately join the fight are swiftly tied up.

Vistani, human male and female (30): AC 8; MV 12; hp 7 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or 1d6 or 1d6 (10 have daggers, 10 have short swords, and 10 have spears); Int Average (12); Dex Average (15); SZ Medium (5'–6'); ML Steady (12); AL N; XP 65 each.

War dogs (6): AC 6; MV 12; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; Int Low (7); SZ Medium (4' long); ML Average 10; AL N; XP 65 each.

Bears, brown (3): AC 7; MV 12; hp 22 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA Hug (2d4 dmg if both paws hit with 18 or better); Int Low (6); SZ Medium (6'+ tall); ML Average (10); AL N; XP 175 each.

Defeating the Vistani means wounding them, which reduces their ability to fight Runold and lessens Alexi's respect for the heroes. If the heroes understood Madam

Rosa's hints, and recognize the vampire at the threat against which the Vistana raunie was soliciting their aid, they might choose to play-act the fight and pull their punches. Be fair in adjudicating such a mock battle (see *Punching and Wrestling* in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for comments on pulling punches), but make sure the heroes realize how difficult it is to fake weapon actions. It is entirely possible for injury to occur even as the result of a feint. In addition, they can't be certain of the Vistani's intentions, which could lead to some tense role-playing moments. Hero cooperation to such an extent can be rewarded at the end of the adventure, with experience points and with additional Vistani treasures.

Should the Vistani win, Runold chooses two heroes as his and Alexi's first victims, the one to whom Alexi bonded and one other. The young Vistana replies, "No, anyone but that one." Runold laughs cruelly, and taunts him in a battle of wills.

If the heroes support Alexi's defiance of Runold, he continues to stand up to the vampire, but if no one says anything, Runold stares the Vistana down. Alexi's burst of defiance signals the other Vistani to cut the heroes free (if they were "captured"). Another battle ensues.

Runold, mature vampire: AC 7; MV 12; hp 79; THAC0 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+ 4; SA Energy drain; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, regenerate 3 hp per round; SZ Medium (5', 6" tall); ML Fanatic (16); AL CE; XP 8,000.
S 18/91, D 17, C 18, I 16, W 11, Ch 15.

If the heroes succeed against the vampire on their own, Runold retreats eventually to regenerate in his coffin. The heroes must either get Alexi to tell where he is laired, or they must uncover the lair themselves.

Should the hero with whom Alexi bonded display courage against Runold and become wounded, you can have this act of courage inspire Alexi to action. Read the following, adjusting as needed to reflect the actual wound.

> You fall to your knees as the vampire continues laughing loudly. You brace yourself for what may well be a killing blow. Suddenly, directly behind your foe, a swirl of mist forms in the darkness, and the young vampire materializes with a look of determination on his face. Then he lunges toward the back of the other vampire, cutting short Runold's laughter.A surprised look spreads across the stout vampire's face as the sharpened point of a bloodied stake bursts out of his chest. The vampire falls forward, hitting the ground like a sack of flour. His flesh turns to dust and slides from his bones. The Vistana youth trembles visibly as he looks at the blood on his hands.

Madam Rosa orders her people to stop attacking, and the fighters immediately back away from the heroes. She charges two of the gypsies to cut off Runold's head and bury it and the body separately. Madam Rosa protects Alexi with magic if the heroes try to hurt him.

If a hero or Nira protests, the old woman says, "The immediate threat to you, *giorgio*, and to my people has been removed. We will discuss Alexi. Come, join me in my vardo."

Madam Rosa gives the heroes the full story of Alexi and Runold and advises that any deaths the Vistani suffered at the heroes' hands are forgiven. Had it not been for them, Alexi might never have gotten the courage to slay his master. As a show of gratitude, she offers the heroes two *potions of extra-healing*, and the proceeds of that night's show (12 gp, 27 sp, and 10 cp, plus whatever the heroes donated).

Madam Rosa explains that she has heard tales of cures for vampirism and would like to attempt to use them on the lad. Rosa looks sternly at Nira and says, "Priestess or no priestess, I will not allow you to harm my grandson."

After a moment of consideration, Nira says the evil was embodied by Runold, and he has been destroyed. She wishes Rosa luck in curing Alexi and departs. (Nira digs up Runold's head during the night and takes it with her when she leaves.)

Finally, Rosa invites the heroes and the priestess to stay in the camp for the night. In the morning, she and the heroes discover that Alexi slipped away during the night.

Recurrence

Alexi left to save his grandmother the grief of having to kill him, because he knows that a cure is impossible. He plans to travel far away, not really thinking about what he will do.

The heroes could run across Alexi later in their travels. While Alexi can wander in any domain, he prefers to stay within familiar territory such as Borca, Dementlieu, Mordent, and Darkon. In these places, his family's vardo is a familiar sight, and the tribe has regular resting places and contacts. Being a young vampire, Alexi undoubtedly will leave a trail of bodies until he learns to control his urges.

Alternately, the adventurers might decide to follow Alexi, seeing him as threat, or Madam Rosa might try to enlist them (for a heavy sum of gold) to find and return her beloved grandson to her.

Jack Bequick
Jack be clever
Jack be visible
Forever.
Show your sad face
In the glass
Still your laughter;
let me pass.
Jack be not shrill
Jack be slow
Don't bite me Jack; just
Let me go.

—Nursery rhyme

Jack Bequick

Biography

Generally, Jack Bequick is little more than a disembodied voice, since he spends most of the time invisible. His voice sounds shrill and maniacal.

Appearance

When visible, Jack appears to be a thin, 5 foot, 9 inch man in his early 20s, with a sallow complexion. His jet-black hair is combed to a point just above his eyes. He shrieks with gales of laughter whenever his victims are terrified.

He wears a garish parody of a ringmaster's outfit—a blood-red tailcoat, trimmed in purple; a pair of loud, yellow pants stained with dirt; a frilly orange shirt with a large white mum pinned to the collar; and a lopsided black top hat, speckled with paint.

Jack Bequick

Trickster Vampire, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	1	Str	18/91
Movement	12	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	9+3	Con	9
Hit Points	66	Int	14
THAC0	9	Wis	10
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Morale	17	XP	6,000

Damage/Attack: 1d6+4

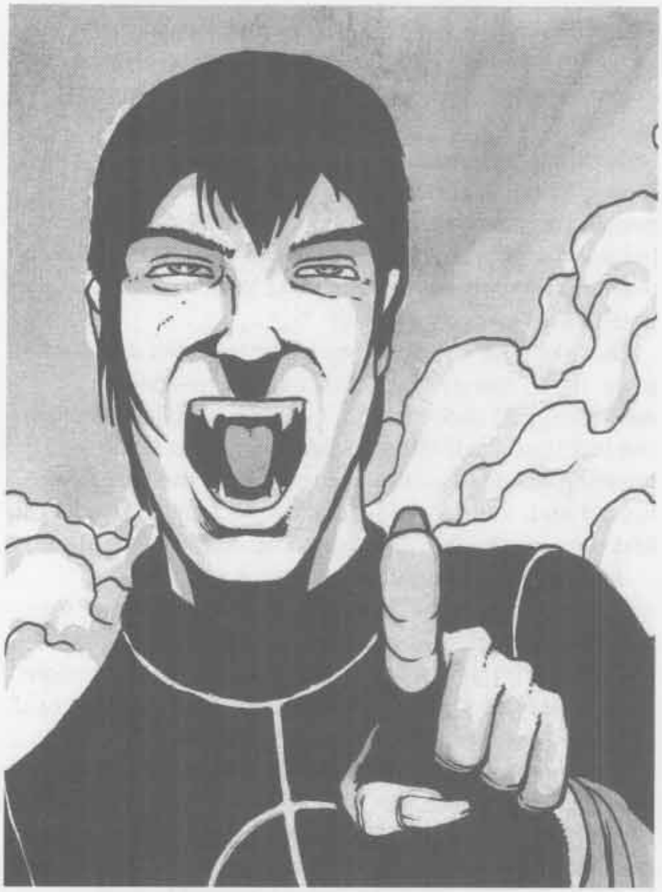
Special Attacks: Energy drain (2 levels per hit), charm gaze (–3 to save).

Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round, never checks morale.

Special Weaknesses: Must scare opponent at least three times before he can turn visible and feed, unable to *shapechange* into an animal form, visible in a funhouse or distorted mirror.

Background

Jack Bequick grew up a happy circus lad. His parents were clowns and made everyone laugh at their tricks and antics. Proud of their success, Jack did everything he could to follow in his parents' footsteps; however, no matter how hard he tried, his parents only frowned and criticized him. "You have no gift for humor, Jackie. What did we ever do to deserve such a artless son as you!" they would say to him, and then order him to the clean the tent. Jack, desperate to prove himself, performed as much as he could, hoping that if the crowd laughed enough, his parents would accept him.



One day during the pre-circus parade, Jack noticed a grouchy old man among the onlookers. While he was aware that sometimes uninterested passers-by were trapped by the sudden press of bodies along the parade route, the teenage Jack felt that everyone could benefit from a little levity—whether they knew it or not.

He tried everything to make the fellow laugh—miming the grouch's expressions, making coins appear behind his ears, squirting water from his boutonniere in the man's face—but with each charade, as the crowd laughed more, the old man just got angrier. Jack was going to culminate his act with a pie in his own face, but he tripped, fumbling the prop right into the old fellow's chest.

The crowd roared, and so did Jack's victim. Unfortunately for Jack, the old man roared out a spell, which instantly turned Jack invisible.

"See how that affects your funny bone!" the wizard scowled as he left.

Enraged, Jack fled to his parents, who were in turn appalled. They blamed him for his own misfortune, citing his lack of humor as his fatal flaw. They declared that Jack would have to solve his problem without their help. Since they could see no point in invisible

clowning—it was too scary and made the animals nervous—they banished the boy from their tent in disgrace. When the circus moved on, Jack stayed behind.

Jack begged the wizard to lift the spell, but the old man refused. Jack tried to research his malady, but people ran from him, thinking his disembodied voice heralded a ghost or worse. At loose ends, Jack took to roaming the streets, stealing food from the open market and feeling sorry for himself.

One night he saw a vampire trap a victim in a back alley. He no longer feared discovery while he eavesdropped (knowing his cursed invisibility hid him), but this time Jack felt a prickle of unease. Upon lowering his dead victim to the ground, the vampire turned and, looking directly at Jack, smiled. For the first time in months, Jack knew he could be seen!

Jack and the vampire struck up a wary companionship, with Jack acting as a lookout for the vampire's attacks. After a while, Jack became obsessed with the idea that becoming a vampire might lift his curse as well as allow him revenge on the wizard. He asked the vampire to make him one.

After his transformation, Jack howled with despair when he discovered that he was still invisible. He took revenge on the wizard, but achieving his curser's death did not lift the invisibility, either. Jack soon discovered that inspiring terror could make him visible long enough to feed (to feed he must terrorize each victim three times). Once sated, Jack can become visible at will for about a week. While invisible, Jack has substance and can handle tangible objects, but he cannot drain or feed until he becomes visible.

Not long after turning Jack, the original vampire was killed in a bold, nighttime raid. The locals staked the unfortunate vampire, then burned the house hiding his coffin. Due to his invisibility, Jack managed to escape unharmed. He left the city in search of a new home.

Jack is not bound to any domain and can travel the Mists freely. Currently, he has settled in Kartakass.

Personality

Jack Bequick is a sadist comedian who has learned to enjoy his grisly curse. He takes pride in terrifying his victims, viewing the terrorizing as more than mere necessity, but rather as an art form; one in which only he can excel.

Combat

Jack prefers to use his *charmed* minions to handle any direct combat, while he watches invisibly from a safe distance. If threatened, Jack always tries to escape, relying heavily on his invisibility and *spider-climb* ability to get him out of scrapes.

He carries a small billy club for self-defense, but rarely uses it.

Jack's House of Horrors

This adventure is for four to six characters, levels 5–9 (about 38 levels). While we have established Jack in Kartakass to provide you with an interesting atmosphere for the scenario, with minimal changes, Jack's funhouse can show up in any domain. Detailed information about Kartakass appears in *Domains and Denizens* in the RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* boxed set.

Background

Jack is very careful to protect himself from the many hazards in Kartakass. Knowing that werewolves roam the area from time to time and they loathe vampires above all else, he is discreet about where and when he feeds.

Jack lures potential victims—beggars, strangers in town, etc.—to his home. For instance, he tricks victims into chasing an expensive gemstone (which is he is pulling while invisible) or a sleek, black cat (which Jack has *charmed*), or he pretends to be a ghost with a message about hidden treasure inside the house.

Jack has created his own personal "funhouse," filled with a series of real and illusory hazards designed to scare the wits out his victims.

Jack invisibly shadows victims as they move through the funhouse. (Heroes can "see" Jack by using a *detect invisibility* or *true seeing* spell; however, they spot him with difficulty since the vampire uses his *spider-climbing* ability to lurk in hard-to-reach places.)

After weakening and terrorizing the victims, the now-visible Jack feeds on them, discarding their bodies into a pit hidden under the dining room.

The Adventure Begins

You can either have the adventurers enter Kartakass randomly through the Mists, or send them into the area to investigate the unexplained disappearance of an adventuring acquaintance.

The heroes can inquire about their missing friend, but the townspeople offer little assistance to strangers. The innkeeper vaguely recalls a person of that description staying at the inn, and skipping out without paying. He

notes that if he'd seen that scrub leave, he would have gotten his money. The innkeeper allows them to look at the room their friend stayed in only if they pay in advance and stay there for the night.

The first night, a black cat leaps into the room. With a single, taunting meow, the cat seizes a small but precious item in its mouth and dashes out. (If the heroes do not stay in town, the cat can appear and pester the heroes any time during the night.) The cat patters silently through the deserted streets, staying just ahead of its pursuers. With a lightning-fast lunge, the cat disappears over the stone wall of a large mansion.

The heroes can either scale the wall or enter through the gate, which is unlocked. A weathered red carpet leads to the door. Paper lanterns hang on either side of the pathway.

(Invisible Jack silently locks the gate as soon as the heroes enter. Heroes specifically watching the gate must successfully save vs. spell to spot Jack's handiwork).

The front door opens as the heroes approach. The adventurers hear bright carousel music spilling from inside. Standing in a recess beside the door is brightly painted mime, wearing a red, ruffled collar, a shirt trimmed with puffy, yellow pompoms, and a pair of oversized, blue clown shoes.

The mime gestures for the heroes to enter, making exaggerated signs of laughter, food, and drink. The mime offers a bouquet of flowers to any female heroes.

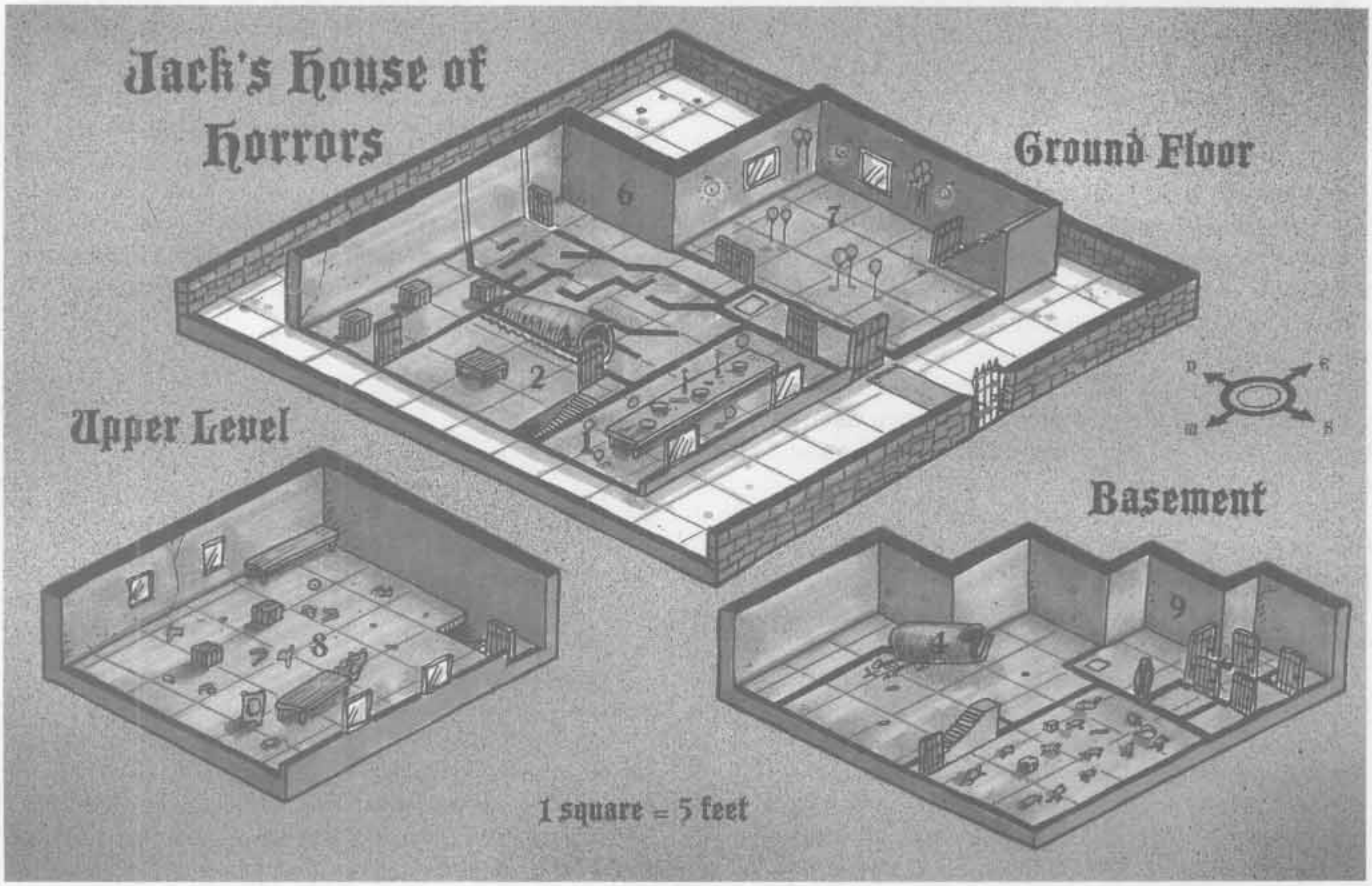
Mime, human male: AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; SZ Medium (5', 6"); ML Average (9); AL NE; XP 15.
S 11, D 15, C 12, I 10, W 9, Ch 13.

The Funhouse

Jack shadows the heroes throughout the funhouse. If at any time the heroes detect Jack and manage to reduce him to zero hit points, Jack turns into *gaseous form* and returns to his coffin (to regenerate for 12 hours) in Area 9.

1. Dining Room: Directed by the mime, the heroes enter a long, narrow, candlelit room. A table is covered with a fantastic assortment of candies and pies. Balloons and streamers hang from the ceiling. Festival music plays on a wind-up toy in the corner.

The banquet and decorations are an elaborate illusion. As soon as the entire party enters the room, the mime slips out, bolting the door. All the candles suddenly go out. Secret panels in the floor open, dropping everyone in the room into a large pit filled



with the remains of Jack's victims. After a few minutes, a deluge of spiders falls from above.

Spiders, hairy (50): AC 8; MV 12, Wb 9; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; Dmg 1; SA Poison (causes –1 to AC and attack rolls and –3 to Dexterity for 1d4+1 rounds); SD Resistant to crushing damage; SZ Tiny (6"); ML Average (10); AL NE; XP 65 each.

Once the heroes manage to either light torches or initiate a *light* spell, they notice a green-striped door. The door leads to a short staircase up that opens into a paneled room.

2. The Mask Room: Jack closes the door and locks it once the party enters the room. Murals portraying circus clowns cover three walls. The fourth wall holds a collection of brightly colored clown masks. A table with jars of pigments and powders stands in the middle of the room. As soon as anyone touches any of the jars, the following happens:

> The jar ripples then disappears under your fingertips, along with the entire table, as if nothing were ever there. A faint, dull clunk sounds from somewhere. The masks on the wall start to melt, changing into a mass of waving hands, moaning mouths, and leering, misshapen heads that chortle insanely, "Come closer . . . help me . . . kiss me." The wall is slowly but surely rumbling toward you.

The jar and table were an illusion to lure the victims inside the room. Behind the wall, 12 goblyns push the ghastly horror on a track in the floor. Anyone who tries to hold the wall back risks absorption into the tortured mass. The track stops two feet short of the opposite wall, pushing the heroes flat against the good wall to avoid the living wall. While the monstrous heads cannot bite, they waggle their tongues lasciviously, attempting to reach the heroes. If the wall licks a hero, he should make a horror check.

Also, Jack uses a *wand of illusion* to give the wall the appearance that no attack harms it—cuts heal instantly, burn marks disappear, etc.

Living wall: AC 8; MV 5 feet per round (pushed); hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 12 per attack on the wall; Dmg 1d6 per attack; SA Absorption; SD Immune to all planar and temporal spells and *passwall* spell, victims must save vs. poison if they cut or blast the wall, or pass out from stench; MR 20%; Int Average (10); SZ Giant (wall area); ML Fearless (20); AL CE; XP 2,000.

After two rounds, a door on the north wall of the room opens up, and the heroes can slide sideways along the normal wall to enter Room 3.

3. Jack-in-a-Boxes: This room contains three man-sized, square boxes wrapped in huge ribbons. If a hero touches any part of any box, the following occurs:

> With a loud *ka-boing*, the lid of each box flies open. A man-sized jack-in-the-box springs forward at you. The "jack" turns out to be a corpse dressed in a clown costume. Your missing adventurer-friend stares blankly at you from behind a hideous, smeared clown smile.

Finding their comrade in such a state should cause each hero to make a horror check.

The adventurers examine the remains of their friend and discover that he died from a vampire bite. Two tiny holes are located on the corpse's now-decaying wrist. The heroes do not recognize the other two corpses. The only exit to this room is a trap door located under one of the boxes.

4. Rotating Tunnel: The heroes drop into another wide corridor that turns into a perfectly round, upward-tilting tunnel. After a few minutes, the tunnel begins to rotate, knocking the heroes off balance. The rotation quickly increases. A flat platform promises the top—about 15 feet away. As its speed increases, blades pop out of the tunnel at random intervals, causing 1d2 points of damage per hit (consider the tunnel to have a THAC0 of 17).

5. Maze of Mirrors. The heroes tumble into a series of corridors lined with tall mirrors. The mirrors distort and warp their appearances, alternately stretching or squashing their features.

> Suddenly, the face of a zombie stares from inside the mirror before you. It follows your every move, grinning hideously as flesh tears from its cheeks. Every mirror around you reflects a monster, all of them mocking your movements in a jerky parody. The first zombie raises its weapon to attack you—and the weapon is identical to yours!

This disturbing sight calls for a horror check. Jack uses his *wand of illusion* to trick the heroes into thinking they have become undead, decaying zombies. Heroes must successfully save vs. spell to dispel the illusion. Once a hero rids himself of the vision, he can notice an extra person in the room, running through the maze for a open door. Now all he has to do is follow...

6. The Gauntlet: While moving down this corridor, the heroes hear a fierce scratching and horrible snarling coming from above. Allow them to watch the ceiling being ripped apart by arms clawing down just out of reach. Then, the floor starts to rise. In three rounds, the heroes are crushed through the ceiling and into the ghasts, unless they escape.

Ghasts (3): AC 4; MV 15; hp 27 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA Stench causes nausea (–2 to attacks) unless victims successfully save vs. poison, paralyzing touch; SD Immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ Medium (5' tall); Int Very (12); ML Elite (13); AL CE; XP 650 each.

7. The Final Act: Brightly colored balloons fill this room. Red-globed lanterns illuminate the relative large space with crimson light. Crazy, lilting music plays as soon as the heroes enter (having possibly barred the door against the ghasts). A gaily painted goblyn in a little red suit capers about, while another goblyn dressed as an organ grinder plays music. Behind them stand 10 goblyns in clown costumes, holding red cream pies. Wormlike forms writhe in the frothy pies.

Jack appears behind the heroes and says:

"Ah friends, I hope the show tonight has entertained you. I don't think I have felt this good for some while, but now it is time for the main act, our feature attraction! I do hope you enjoy it!" He smiles widely, revealing sharp fangs, then shouts, "Take them!"

On the first round, the goblyns throw cream pies, which contain rot grubs. Any hero hit by a cream pie must successfully save vs. death magic or be blinded for one round, as well as contend with 1d4 rot grubs.

Rot grub (1d4 ×10 pies): AC 9; MV 1; hp 1 each; THAC0 0; #AT 0; SA 10% chance equal to opponent's AC of burrowing into skin on contact, kill in 1d3 turns by reaching the heart; SW Killed by fire or *cure disease* spell; SZ Tiny (½"–2" long); Int Animal (1); ML Unsteady (5); AL NE; XP 15 each.

Goblyns (12): AC 4; MV 12; hp 18 each; THAC0 13; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6 or 2d6; SA –2 to opponents' surprise roll, cause fear check on first encounter; MR 10%; SZ Medium (5' tall); Int Low (5); ML Fearless (20); AL CE; XP 975 each.

In subsequent rounds, the goblyns attack with cudgels, trying only to knock the heroes unconscious. If five or more goblyns are killed, Jack goes invisible and lets in the ghasts.

Jack himself avoids fighting, relying on the ghasts to subdue the heroes. He summons 2d6 more goblyns to aid him if the ghasts cannot kill the heroes.

8. Goblyn Room: This is filled with torn costumes, unidentifiable mechanisms, and smelly goblyn refuse.

9. Basement: The house's lower level holds Jack's coffin and four dungeon cells. The heroes can access this area through a secret door shown on the map.

If Jack recuperates here, he should be fairly easy to stake. Underneath his body rests a small bag, containing five gems (value 800 gp) and a *ring of protection +2*. Generally, the dungeon contains no prisoners; however, if you want the heroes to pick up an NPC follower, they could rescue a hapless adventurer.

Escape

If the heroes survive, they inform the townspeople of Jack's activities. Enraged, the people storm the house and burn it. As the fire rages, the jubilant townsfolk invite the heroes to stay for a special toast.

Smoke from the blaze drifts into the heroes' eyes causing them to water momentarily. When their vision clears, the heroes can notice that the townspeople appear to dance and writhe in the flickering light. Fur sprouts from beneath their shirts and claws curl from their fingertips.

The person nearest the heroes, now more wolf than man, gives them a toothy grin and finishes the toast with a chilling howl that becomes a beastly chorus echoing throughout the city streets.

All of the heroes should make horror checks. If the heroes leave quietly without making trouble, the werewolves most likely allow them to escape unharmed.

Recurrence

Unless the party personally stakes Jack, the trickster vampire escapes to another domain. In time, Jack builds another funhouse in a new city. The heroes could hear about strange disappearances and investigate, only to find Jack terrorizing innocents again.

If you want to build a higher-powered challenge for the party, Jack could send a message, taunting the adventurers into trying their skill against his new funhouse. Since the heroes are warned, feel free to build a very dangerous encounter.

1 November, DR 195:
Word today from a farmer that his fields had suddenly died. Lord Thornwood and the Order investigated, and found the sacred shrine defiled. Crude scars deface the stones, blood marks the ground, and a deep hole mars the shrine's center. Father Epurjaar and his clerics will sanctify the place and fill the crater. Prayers will be said tonight at the Order's chapel for the vanished druids. Lord Thornwood suspects orc shamans and has ordered all patrols strengthened.

—The Record of Thornwood

Lady Heather Shadowbrooke

Lady Heather Shadowbrooke

Biography

Heather Shadowbrooke's vampirism is unique in that only the blood of an animal or the sap of a tree satiates her. This poses an unbearable curse for the druid, and after each feeding, she wails loudly. Area villagers believe a banshee now haunts their local circle of stones.

Appearance

Heather Shadowbrooke wears her black, silken hair braided down the center of her back. Her hazel eyes complement her darkly tanned complexion. A dark green, homespun dress and brown cloak serve the druidess as her standard costume. A leather pouch dangles from her plain leather belt. Heather also carries a sickle, which appears darkly rusted (it is actually dried blood).

Heather Shadowbrooke

Druidic Vampiress, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	3	Str	18/76
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	8+3	Con	12
Hit Points	63	Int	16
THAC0	11	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1or 2	Cha	15
Morale	16	XP	5,000

Magic Resistance (all forms): 5%

Damage/Attack: Against animals or plants: 1d4+6; Against humans or demihumans: 1d4+5 (sickle) or by other weapon (+2, +4)

Special Attacks: Energy drain (animals or plants only); spells: 1st—*entangle* ×2, *cause light wounds* ×2; *faerie fire*; 2nd—*barkskin, charm person/mammal, heat metal, speak with animals*; 3rd—*spike growth, summon insects*, 4th—*animal summoning I.*

Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round.

Dire wolf form: AC 6; MV 12; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ Large (7'–12').

White deer form: AC 7; MV 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ Medium (5').

Bat form: AC 8 (4 in ideal flying conditions); MV 1, Fl 24 (C); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ Tiny (1').

Background

Lady Heather was abandoned by her parents and raised by druids. She channeled her emotional ties into her



affinity for nature. Her youth (25 years) and prickly demeanor outweighed her prodigious skill when her druidic circle chose a new head.

Heather was deeply offended at being passed over. She brooded, trying to figure out why her friends did not choose her. She started hearing whispers in her head, promising her the title of Grand Druidess if only she purged her enemies. She struggled against the voices, but her need for retribution overcame her.

Heather slew all her circle as she stood the third watch. Their blood stained the standing stones, magically marking them with the runes H E A TH E R. Lady Heather was too frenzied to notice. The voices in her mind held her attention, singing, "You are now the Grand Druidess, may you reign eternally."

In the morning, Heather discovered the price of her power. All vegetable and animal life within a three-mile radius of the stone circle was dead—dry and lifeless, unable to burn or crumble. Devastated, she tried to cast healing spells, but the circle negated all druidic spells.

Grief-stricken, Heather eventually realized that outside the radius, her gift was stronger than before. The stones made her queasy, so she turned her skills to the remaining woods beyond the dead zone.

As her daze subsided, Heather noticed food no longer

assuaged her hunger. She was leaning faintly against a tree the third night when an overwhelming desire struck her. As her teeth sank into the wood, she realized they were now vampiric fangs. The sap ran down her throat like ambrosia while the tree withered and died. Heather wept, at last understanding that her destiny was to destroy that which she most loves.

Heather has two companions in her misery. One is a vampiric shambling mound, which can subsist both on plant fluids and on human or demihuman blood. The other is Mugrub, Heather's warthog companion who also, because of her crime, somehow transformed into a half-man/half-warthog monstrosity. Mugrub guards the circle of stones in the daytime and eats the remains of whatever his mistress and the vampiric mound drain.

Personality

Heather's goals are to somehow restore the standing stones and their vicinity to life (she is doomed to failure) and diligently to protect the rest of her woods from any further harm. Like most villains, she does not see her own part in her horrific situation. Instead, she blames the druids and has vowed to slay any other druids that come near.

Heather is not tied to a specific realm, but can reside in any domain where forests (and druids) exist. Her order's solitary nature and Heather's recent turning both indicate that she has no contact with the domain lord.

Combat

How Heather fights depends on where the heroes encounter her. Within the circle shrine's area of effect, she uses her *sickle +1* or *shapechanges* into her dire wolf form. Outside the circle's effect, she uses her spells. A favorite trick is to *entangle* a heavily armored fighter, and then cast *heat metal* on his armor. Another is to *summon insects* on someone caught in a snare. She also enjoys *charming* an opponent's war dog into attacking him.

She can be reduced to zero hit points, but Heather's *gaseous form* (hidden in the fog described on page 72) floats up to any tree hollow where she rests and regenerates in bat form. It takes 24 hours for her to recover to full strength.

The Missing Druids

This adventure is for four to six characters, levels 5–8 (about 35 total levels). Although it is not necessary, the party should have at least one hero who is a druid or who has close contact with druids, to strengthen the plot connections.

Background

The druidic circle of stones is the key to Heather's existence. Each black monolith stands 15 feet tall and is etched with a blood-red rune. At one time, they enhanced the casting of druidic spells and enriched nearby forests and fields. Now they have the reverse effect:

- No druid can cast spells within the perimeter of the circle's area of effect (three-mile radius), not even Heather.
- No clerical spells of the plant or animal spheres work within the area.
- Magical items based on plant or animal spheres created from natural objects do not work. For example, a previously cast *shillelagh* loses its effect, as do *goodberries* prepared prior to entering the area.
- Nothing grows in the area of effect. The trees are dead and any animal that enters the area dies. Animals instinctively know something is wrong and will not willingly enter. Adventurers or NPCs who take animal form and enter the area must successfully save vs. death magic for each round they remain—or they die. Only Heather can *shapechange* without penalty.
- If Heather is reduced to zero hit points, the stones emit a dense fog that conceals her gaseous form.

For each stone destroyed (AC 0, 30 hp) Heather permanently loses 10 hp and her HD, THAC0, etc. are reduced by one. The first successful strike on a stone sends a bolt of energy arcing from the stone that inflicts the same amount of damage on the attacking hero.

During the day, the vampiric shambling mound rests deep in a muddy pit shaded by a fallen log. Looking into the pit reveals only a bunch of brambles, twigs, and mud. If it has fed within three hours, it bleeds when hit. At night, the mound uses its large maw with two pronounced thorn fangs to voraciously attack any wanderers who enter the circle's perimeter.

Shambling mound vampire: AC 0; MV 6; HD 9; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SA Victim entangled if both arms hit (suffer 1d8+1 hp of damage from bite plus loss of level), lightning attacks give 1 HD growth and 1' height per attack; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to blunt weapons, half damage from piercing/slashing weapons, immune to fire, half damage from cold if save failed, regenerates 1 hp/round; MR 5%; SZ Large (8' tall); ML Fanatic (17); Int Very (11); AL CE; XP 5,000.

Mugrub the warthog/manbeast guards the stones during the day. A large, muscular, hairy man with head of a warthog, Mugrub fights fearlessly by grabbing an opponent and slashing back and forth with his large tusks.

Mugrub, warthog monstrosity: AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10; SD Silver or +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 1 hp per round, continues fighting until –7 hp; SZ Large (7' tall); Int Low (6); ML Elite (14); AL NE; XP 1,400.

The Adventure Begins

The adventurers can get involved through a variety of hooks. A druid hero can investigate the Briarweed Forest Circle—clearly some druidic activity still occurs in the blasted area—or a nearby circle can hire the whole party for the same purpose. You might even set up the first meeting with Heather as a random forest encounter. If the heroes spend a long time investigating Briarweed Forest, they encounter Lady Heather in *The Lone Druid.* If they just march into the site of the standing stones, start with *The Blasted Circle.*

The Lone Druid

As the heroes enter Briarweed Forest, they see signs that it is well tended.

> The babbling of a brook underlies the living quiet of the woods. Birds call in the trees, and insects hum and buzz about their business. A rustle just beyond the trail turns out to be a curious fawn who peeps out, long ears standing at attention.

If the heroes suspect such an idyllic scene, lay it on thicker to forestall any natural suspicion or worry. When the heroes meet Lady Heather, she is tending a mistletoe plant.

> A human voice murmurs nearby...it sounds like a woman talking to a baby or pet animal in lilting, smiling tones. The murmur leads to an attractively tanned, black-haired young woman in a simple green dress. She perches about ten feet off the ground in the crotch of a majestic oak. Her brown fingers gracefully thread into the leaves of a small plant she holds, removing dead twigs.

Any druid or ranger recognizes the plant and Lady Heather's druidic garments. If the heroes stop to talk, Lady Heather finishes her task, and swings lightly from the tree. She speaks solemnly (flashing a smile would reveal her teeth) and vaguely if they ask about the missing circle. She agrees something bad must have happened, but she doesn't know what. If the heroes are riding or accompanied by animals, she warns that going into the dead area will kill the beasts. She claims to have arrived here only recently. Heather avoids discussing her past, saying that she has much work to do, and must be getting back to it. She can give directions to the blasted circle, but refuses to accompany the adventurers.

Heather asks any druid to help her while the party goes on. Once they are alone, she tries to kill him or her. If the heroes don't split up (or there is no druid hero), she makes excuses about her work and fades into the woods.

Perhaps the heroes charge off as a group to see the standing stones. Continue with *The Blasted Circle.* If they show suspicion, Heather waits for the cover of night to take action against them. Should the heroes actually attack Lady Heather at this point, she defends herself.

The Blasted Circle

Any heroes riding or accompanied by animals find their creatures nervously refuse to go forward. If they force them, remind the party of Heather's warning.

> The nature of the wood around you changes abruptly. The trees stand brown and blasted, their leaves hanging lifeless from brittle branches. All small incidental sounds of insect and bird and beast have stopped, and even the crunch of leaves underfoot sounds muffled.

Should an adventurer crumble a dead leaf, the texture is leathery rather than crisp, and the thing will not shred. Nor will it burn. A short search reveals the unrotting corpse of a squirrel. A ranger or druid hero, or someone with an agriculture proficiency or a secondary skill in forestry or hunting, can tell the trees and animals bear no sign of disease nor any physical wounds. After traveling through this eerie landscape for some minutes, the heroes come to the blasted stone circle.

> The six hulking stones stand like giant tombstones in the dread silence. Once they were shaded by an ancient grove of oaks, but now splashes of light cast uneasy spotlights across the pitted surfaces. In fact, a rune seems deeply, redly etched into each face.

If any of the party has a language proficiency to read runes, he can make out the runes for H, E, A, TH, E, R.

Note that TH is one letter in the runic alphabet. A concerted search turns up no skeletons or clues as to the whereabouts of the missing druids, though a deep, muddy pit filled with brambles and sharp twigs (the lair of the vampiric shambling mound) lies in the shadow of a fallen tree trunk. The creature is not active during the day.

The heroes find the dead zone has a fairly sharp perimeter. However, some trees outside this area are also dried out. The symptoms are the same: dry but leathery, definitely nonflammable. Further scrutiny of reveals two distinct punctures in the bark.

If the heroes suspect Heather or want to stay overnight, they might camp near the dead zone. If they leave the area entirely, a nearby village reports missing and/or slaughtered stock, which should bring them back.

The Missing Horse

If Lady Heather suspects the heroes doubt her innocence, she calls one of their mounts in order to break up the party, so that she can deal with them in smaller groups. Should the heroes have no horses, a local farmer's nag travels through their campsite to answer Lady Heather's summons. Adjust to fit the circumstances.

> The night air feels unusually thick this evening. Your campfire gives off a warm glow, but does not provide much comfort.
>
> Suddenly, the horses start whickering anxiously, and one of the animals bites through the picket rope and gallops off.

A mounted pursuit is possible, but the adventurers either have to spend several rounds saddling up the other horses or ride bareback (heroes with the riding proficiency must make a successful check every three rounds). In any event, the horse gallops at a dead run (see Horse Table 2 in the *Horses* entry of the MONSTROUS MANUAL accessory). Light sources make tracking possible, but the going is slow.

Observant heroes notice the other horses are not spooked. An adventurer with a *speak with animals* spell is told, "She called. (Name of horse) went." They do not know who "she" is.

How the heroes encounter Heather depends on how closely they follow the horse, and whether they stay together. Adventurers quick on the scene can find both Heather and the shambling mound latched onto the



downed horse. Later arrivals might catch a glimpse of Heather and the shambling mound disappearing into the forest, while Mugrub tears the limbs off the animal and begins to feast. Either instance might merit a horror check.

If a party of three or fewer heroes arrives, Heather, Mugrub, and the mound abandon their feeding to attack. However, should the adventurers stick together, Heather feeds as much as she can, and plans other ways to divide and conquer.

In the event that the heroes dawdle or have trouble tracking the animal, all they find is the horse's bloodied bones, picked very clean. Mugrub's cloven hoofprints leave a definite trail into the dead area.

Other tricks Heather might try to separate the heroes include enticing them to chase her white deer form; innocently asking for a single escort to a remote location; lying in a hedge moaning as if injured; or any similar scheme you can devise. The more suspicious the heroes appear, the more Heather tries to eliminate them.

Fight at the Shrine

If the heroes follow Mugrub's hoofprints away from the bones of the horse, they wind up at the circle of stones. Adjust this section to fit the circumstances should other events have occurred before they reach the climactic fight.

> As you close in on the circle of stones, you hear a loud wailing, as if a woman is in pain. Heather kneels in front of one of the stones of the shrine. She beats her hands against the stone, and the moonlight shines on her vampiric teeth.

If the heroes never suspected Heather, discovering that the innocent druid is a vampire might call for a horror check. As the adventurers near Heather, the vampiric shambling mound rises from its pit and attacks them. Mugrub charges them from behind one of the stones. Heather is surprised the first round, but after that she fights with her *sickle +1*.

If things look desperate, Heather flees in dire wolf form, hoping to lure the party outside the dead zone. Should they fall for this ploy, the adventurers become subject to her full spell use.

As soon as the shambling mound reaches zero hit points, it bursts into flames, collapses into a pile of smoke, and is sucked back into the pit under the deadfall. When Heather reaches zero hit points, thick red fog billows out of the runes and mixes with her gaseous form, concealing it.



Recurrence

The heroes must complete two tasks to vanquish Heather—destroy the circle of stones and eliminate the vampiress herself. The heroes are unlikely to find enough clues in one meeting to address both.

If the circle still stands Heather and her companions can regenerate, and remain in this area. Should the adventurers topple the stones, Heather flees in *gaseous form*. Eventually, she finds another circle and slays again. Depending on the heroes' actions, the vampiric shambling mound and Mugrub might have been eliminated. Heather can acquire new companions or not as you see fit. The heroes learn that their mission is not over when word reaches them of more vanished druids and another corrupted shrine.

To permanently eliminate the vampiress, the heroes must stake Heather's bat, deer or dire wolf form with a freshly cut green stake outside the dead zone.

Whisper sounds behind you.
Gurgle underfoot.
No one ever finds you.
No one dares to look.
Alligator Lenny
Gags you with his stink,
Plucks your every penny,
Drowns you in the drink.

—Children's jumprope rhyme

Ezra

Ezra

Biography

A scheming vampire thief, Ezra runs a covert local criminal operation with the aid of his loyal elf assistant and his familiarity with the sewer system.

Appearance

Ezra stands 5 foot, 11inches tall and weighs 250 lbs. Bloodshot, bright orange eyes glare over his large, almost beakish nose, and his mouth hangs slackly below it.

Ezra wears filthy, knee-high pants and squishy, brown shoes. He carries a *dagger +2* and a *scarf garotte*.

Ezra

Thief Nosferatu, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	1	Str	18/76
Movement	12, Sw 12	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	8+3	Con	15
Hit Points	60	Int	16
THAC0	11	Wis	13
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	8
Morale	16	XP	3,000

Damage/Attack 1d6+4 or by weapon
Special Attacks: Constitution drain (up to 3 points per round, automatic after first successful hit), *charm* gaze, telepathic *charm aura* against previously bitten victims, *shapechange* into alligator form twice each day, *scarf garotte* (see text).
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round.
Special Weaknesses: Must drain 3 Constitution points per day or lose 1 HD, must rest in coffin at least eight hours per day or lose 1 HD, each vial of holy water causes 3d6+3 points of damage.
Thief Abilities: PP 75; OL 85; MS 100; F/RT 60; HN 40; HS 90; RL 35

Alligator form: AC 1; MV 6, Sw 24; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/1d12; SA Surprises opponents with –2 penalty; SZ Large (12').

Background

Ezra grew up in the slums of Il Aluk (when that city still lived). His parents died before he was 12 years old, and Ezra survived by stealing, ducking into the sewers to escape pursuit. Big for his age, he nevertheless was agile and quick-fingered. By age 20, he had built a network of pickpockets. Within five years, Ezra's



network challenged the Thieves Guild for control of the city's underbelly.

Then Ezra and his band burglarized a richly appointed mansion that appeared unguarded. As they were leaving, Ezra and his companions discovered that four very pale, cloaked figures had watched their every move. The thieves pulled their weapons, but the pallid beings just smiled, revealing pointed fangs.

The mansion belonged to a cell of Kargat vampires, minions of Lord Azalin, who decided Ezra alone was worth making nosferatu. The thief enjoyed his new immortal form although he loathed his masters. For over a century, he schemed, displaying outward loyalty. While he was building up his masters' trust, Ezra again created his own network of servants and slaves. His best recruit, picked up 55 years ago, is Flumbart the elf. Flumbart has the charisma and personality that Ezra lacks, yet the ruthlessness to keep his master's minions, vampiric and otherwise, loyal.

One night Ezra's minions went through the city and burned the cell's every spare coffin, forcing them to rest in their primary coffins. Taking out the mansion guards was a small matter. Finally, Ezra's men hauled the coffins to the graveyard—posing as gravediggers—and opened them up to the bright rays of the midday

sun. Ezra and his lieutenant Flumbart escaped to another domain (your choice) long before the recent events in Il Aluk. In this new place, Flumbart's easy charm and natural charisma was invaluable in recruiting a new thief network.

In addition to human allies, there are beasts in Ezra's sewers. Baby alligators were intentionally introduced some years ago to eliminate a rat menace, on the assumption that without a ready source of food, they'd die out when their job was done. Now, Ezra ensures the alligators stay well fed, and in return they obey him like faithful hounds.

Personality

The social graces of compassion and conversation escape Ezra. His ruthless calculation chills those few who meet him and live to tell about it. Ezra despises living beings who do not follow him. His contempt resembles the scorn an ill person sometimes holds for medicine he must take to survive. Ezra delights in tormenting his victims before their deaths.

His only passion is power. He is not satisfied until he controls a city's underworld, because he considers the Thieves Guild the true master of any large settlement. His fanatical need for undisputed power has allowed Ezra to become more dependent on Flumbart than perhaps is wise. Ezra views the elf as the perfect tool for his needs and cannot imagine working without him.

Combat

Mostly, Ezra targets rival thieves and other underworld denizens who stand in the way of his passion for power. Using the extensive sewer network, he can travel the city at will, and lure or drag victims into his territory. When his summoned alligators appear and the targets begin to fight, Ezra strikes from the rear.

One of Ezra's techniques involves his magic *scarf garotte*. He has a 20% chance of slipping the flithy scrap of silk around a victim's neck. If he succeeds, the victim loses five hit points of damage per round for three rounds, finally losing consciousness and becoming stunned for 1d10 rounds. Losing consciousness face-down in sewer effluence has further consequences, of course: review *Holding Your Breath* in chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*. A successful bend bars roll allows the victim to break free of the *scarf garotte*.

He also attacks as alligators do, dragging a victim under the sewage to drown (it takes a successful bend bars roll to free oneself from the bite; inflicting over 25 points of damage also works). In alligator form, Ezra's scales are chocolate brown.

If reduced to zero hit points, Ezra collapses into a yellowish-brown liquid indistinguishable from the sewer water. After reaching one of his coffins, which lie submerged in hidden passages, the liquid sinks to the bottom of the tunnel, seeping inside the coffin through bored-out holes. His primary coffin is guarded by a sewer fiend. If he uses one of his three alternate coffins, he summons alligators to serve as his guards.

Ezra can be killed by immersion in running water; however, the average sewer flow is too slow to call "running" and the stuff that oozes beneath the city is too contaminated to classify as "water." If sprayed with holy water, Ezra suffers 3d6+3 points of damage, and his howls of pain reverberate through the sewers.

Guild of Thieves

This adventure is for four to six characters of about levels 7–10 (about 42 total levels). The party should have at least one hero who can cast *heal* and *cure disease* spells.

Though designed as a prequel to *The Way Out* (see page 86), the adventure can be played as a separate scenario, if you beef up Muntox's reward offer (for example, he can design custom jewelry for each adventurer or promise a series of future payments by each of the grateful shopkeepers).

Background

Flumbart has recently extended Ezra's extortion ring and Muntox Oresmelter, a dwarf metalsmith, is one of many new victims in the neighborhood. The 25 gp per week fee seems harsh, and in Muntox's case it would break his business, because his daughter requires medicine from the local alchemist for a rare skin disease (at a cost of 15 gp per week). However, the dwarf knows an old legend about a gateway out of the Demiplane of Dread—his story ties in to the vampire sage Mulger D'Ajust, page 85. He hopes to use this knowledge to pay some heroes to bust up the extortion ring.

The thieves use a furniture workshop on the corners of Ghost Way and Skull Street as a front for their guild activities. Flumbart keeps his office in the main building, and runs guild meetings in the warehouse.

The key to defeating Ezra in this scenario (since attacking the powerful vampire at this point would likely kill the party) is to take out his linchpin Flumbart. Losing the elf should cause Ezra's network to collapse into anarchy, forcing the vampire to flee and build a new organization.

The Adventure Begins

As the party enjoys dinner in a local inn, a crusty dwarf approaches them. He identifies himself as Muntox Oresmelter, a master metalsmith. With little preamble, the fellow launches into his story.

"A month ago, wagon maker Clyde Endy was approached by two thugs who demanded 25 gold pieces a week protection money. He refused to give in to the extortion and drove them off with a mallet. The next day, Clyde's head was hanging from his shop sign." The dwarf looks grimly out from lowered brows.

"Now they've approached me."

Muntox believes the town watchmen are being bribed. He's hoping strangers like the heroes might undertake a little adventure for hire—say, wiping out the strongarm men and their bosses. Of course, Muntox offers an enormous prize as an incentive.

"As a show of good faith, I have here 80 gold pieces, yours, just for speaking with me. More precious by far, I also know a story about a formula for getting to a world far happier than ours. Bring me proof that the extortionists have fallen under your blades and I'll gladly share my priceless information."

If they ask why Muntox does not just leave, he replies, "Once you learn the tale, you'll see I could not make it. Only strong adventurers like you can secure all that is necessary."

Muntox refuses to discuss the story further until he has definite proof the problem is solved.

Thieves World

Allow the heroes latitude in finding the thief headquarters by tailing the thugs, joining the trade, or other means. Be as brief or as drawn-out as the skills of the heroes and the temperaments of the players dictate. The clues at right are a cumulative guideline to the sorts of information they might discover. Poor investigators earn only the first one or two clues. Characters with more finesse acculmulate more information. For a fast investigation, roll 1d10 and give the heroes every clue up to and including that number.

Clues

1. The Thieves Guild runs the extortion ring.
2. The Thieves Guild has connections to the merchants in the tradesmen's part of the city.
3. Because there are alligators there, no one ever comes out of the sewers alive.
4. The elves at the furniture workshop are involved with the Thieves Guild.
5. New guild recruits must spend several nights in the sewers as part of their training.
6. Every thief speaks highly of Flumbart.
7. The secret owner of the furniture workshop is named Ezra, and he is not an elf.
8. The furniture workshop elves are innocent dupes, but something in that building is heavily guarded by a powerful force.
9. Ezra, the leader of the Thieves Guild, is a powerful vampire.
10. Ezra can't inspire loyalty among the guild members the way Flumbart does.

Investigating Flumbart

Subtle inquiries in town (or by using any rogue or thief connections) reveal that locals consider Flumbart the head of the guild and respect him. If the informants know Ezra, they identify him as the invincible and fearsome power backing the elf.

If the heroes decide to investigate Flumbart they can visit the furniture workshop during the day, or approach the Thieves Guild after dark.

Flumbart's Furniture Workshop is a two-story brick structure located in the market ward of the city. Heroes who observe the place in the daytime notice that it appears to be a combination furniture manufactury and storefront staffed exclusively by elves. If the heroes enter the store, the friendly sales staff—Relko and Bigara—shows them furniture samples, trying eagerly to make a sale. (The salesmen have no idea that the business is a front for thieves.)

If the heroes ask to speak to Flumbart, the salesmen direct them to a fair-haired elf secretary named Shorimbra. She tells the heroes that Flumbart is a very busy elf and that he will see them as soon as he can. (A bribe reduces the waiting period.)

Flumbart's office is large and sunny. The tall, handsome elf greets the heroes amiably and immediately launches into an elaborate sales pitch. In public, Flumbart affects a friendly but aggressive and relentlessly salesman-like image. In the guild, he is charismatic, efficient, and ruthless. His loyalty to Ezra is unswerving.

Flumbart, elf male third-level thief: AC 7; MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA Poison (letter opener); ML Fanatic (17); AL NE; XP 175. S 9, D 15, C12, I 16, W 11, Ch 17.

If the heroes mention extortion threats to local businesses, Flumbart acts sincerely concerned, but refuses to say whether he's been approached. He genially laughs off any accusations of his involvement, noting his rivals will say anything to undermine his honest success.

When the heroes leave the premises, Flumbart assigns two thieves to shadow them and find out what they know. If the adventurers aren't careful, these spies can eavesdrop on their plans, ruining any element of surprise.

If the heroes case the workshop after dark, they see two thieves go to the adjoining warehouse every few minutes and knock in a certain pattern (your choice) on the loading dock door. A large figure then appears, allowing two vicious dogs to sniff the thieves over for a moment. This pattern of activity repeats for a few hours, then all movement stops for about two hours, after which pairs start to exit and return to the city.

The adventurers can search the main workshop building at night by breaking in somehow. However, they should take great care to make no noise or else they might alert the thieves in the warehouse. If the party wishes to explore the building at night, continue with *At the Workshop*.

New Recruits

Joining the Thieves Guild is a risky but possible way to investigate the extortion ring and its masters. If the heroes choose this approach, they'll need to find a sponsor in order to get into a guild meeting. Any low-level thief carries a short sword, wears leather armor, and conceals approximately 25 gold pieces about his person.

Average guild representative, human male or female fourth-level thief: AC 6; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Backstab (damage ×2); Int Average (12); SZ Medium (5',6"–6'); ML Elite (13); AL Neutral Evil; XP 175.

First the potential recruit must go through an initiation test, which starts with surviving four hours in the sewers or picking a particular person's pocket.

Next, introduce the hero(es) to Ezra, who tests them himself to see if they have the nerve to join his guild. He might spring up behind them in the tunnels, or snap at them in alligator form before *shapechanging* into his nosferatu form. Emphasize the power and coldbloodedness of his demeanor; make the adventurer(s) realize that they are face to face with a ruthless villain. Scare them with the possibility that they might have been found out already. Obviously, taking on the vampire at this point would be foolish; the heroes just have to brazen out their roles as budding thieves. Ezra disappears as abruptly as he arrived, and the adventurers face their sponsor again.

Once they pass the initiation test, the sponsor invites the hero(es) to the recruiting lecture that night and gives them a special knock (not the same as established guild members use) to get into the workshop.

After dark, as many heroes as have decided to join up go to the workshop in pairs, knock, and are sniffed over by the war dogs. They join a small knot of people in the workshop area (Area 4). Once Flumbart starts speaking, a hush descends on the group as the new recruits drink in his every word:

> "Let me welcome our new recruits to the family. Look around you and see the faces of your new brothers and sisters. You'll never be alone, cold or afraid again." His smile is warm and encompasses the whole room. The relaxation he produces in your fellow recruits is palpable. Tension flows away, replaced by a sense of well-being. "Our support is always here, and all we ask is your loyalty. We don't think you'll ever want to leave."

He continues to speak in a charismatic and friendly tone, but his words become darker, warning you that the penalties for withholding goods and information from your guild leaders are harsh and swiftly meted out. The others in the group seem to eat up the fatherly-justice overtones of the message, though, hanging on the elf's every word.

After his opening remarks, Flumbart gets down to the brass tacks of guild cuts, territories and chain of command. It's clear that the heroes are only getting the basic information that raw recruits need to know.

Portray Flumbart as an oily used car salesman or movie mafioso—very smooth, completely soulless. At the end of the talk, Flumbart assigns each recruit pair a territory to work for the next day, and sends them out.

If the heroes dawdle or linger, they can overhear Flumbart addressing an established thief in confidential tones, warning that Ezra wouldn't like to hear of his failure, and that Ezra could get very angry. The elf points out that the thief has only one more chance to come through. Additionally, Flumbart regrets that while he himself would merely maim the thief as a lesson, Ezra's punishments are not so merciful.

If the heroes hide among the crates of furniture, they might be able to remain in the workshop after the meeting. If discovered, they are brought before Ezra and Flumbart in the interrogation room (Area 7), unless they can bribe their way free (your discretion).

At the Workshop

At night, war dogs patrol the main workshop building. Even quiet heroes have a 10% chance to encounter the dogs. Any loud noise increases the chance of discovery to 30%. Once alerted, the dogs arrive in 1d4 rounds.

War dogs (2): AC 6; MV 12; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ Medium (4' long); ML Average (10); Int Semi- (3); XP 65 each.

1. Reception Area: During work hours, this office area is staffed by a fair-haired elf secretary named Shorimbra. It is empty at night. The desk contains nothing of interest. The interior doors in this room swing open and closed to allow easy access for the dogs that patrol the place at night.

2. Proprietor's Office: Flumbart sits here during the day. The desk contains neatly stacked business records and a poisoned (Type A) letter opener for dealing with "unruly customers."

3. Showroom: Attractive furniture pieces stand in homelike groupings. During the day, the two elf salesmen pitch customers here.

4. Workshop Area: During the day, four elf craftsmen hammer, saw, plane, and finish furniture. Adventurers who wander in are returned to the showroom ("Sorry, the boss doesn't want anyone in here."). Tools, along with a block and tackle for hoisting heavy loads, hang on every wall. The craftsmen do not know that the business is a cover.

5. Latrines: Despite the fresh perfumes put in here each day, this area has a slightly sickening odor. Heroes who listen at the 18-inch diameter holes have a 10% chance of hearing some splashing below (in the sewer).

6. Storage Area/Carters Entrance: Several pieces of furniture await shipment to customers. During evening hours, Jobar the night guard and his two war dog companions stand guard here, checking the thieves as they pass through. The dogs have both keen hearing and trained senses of smell.

Jobar, half-ogre guard: AC 3; MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (+2); SZ Large (8'); ML Steady (12); Int Average (10); XP 420.

War dogs (2): AC 6; MV 12; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ Medium (4' long); ML Average (10); Int Semi- (3); XP 65 each.

7. The Warehouse: This large room holds stacks of crated furniture. During the day, workmen occupy this area. At night, Flumbart holds the Thieves Guild meetings here. A room opens off to one side of the warehouse.

8. Interview Room: Here Ezra meets with recalcitrant thieves or captives. He sits behind a table with Flumbart standing on his right. The interviewee stands on a secret trap door, while Ezra asks questions. If the nosferatu believes the thief is lying, he signals to Flumbart to pull a lever by his chair, which opens the trap door and drops the victim into the sewer. Usually the alligators below make quick work of the unfortunate victim. Captives are disposed of the same way after all needed information has been gleaned from them.

Alligators (3): AC 5; MV 6; Sw 12; HD 3; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/1d12 (tail); SA Surprise (–2 penalty to opponents' surprise roll); SZ Large (9' long); Int Animal (1); ML Average (9); AL N; XP 65 each.

Should the heroes successfully hide in the warehouse after the meeting, they might surprise Ezra and Flumbart while they are interrogating some thieves. The villains try to maneuver the heroes over the trap door so Flumbart can pull the lever, sending them below.

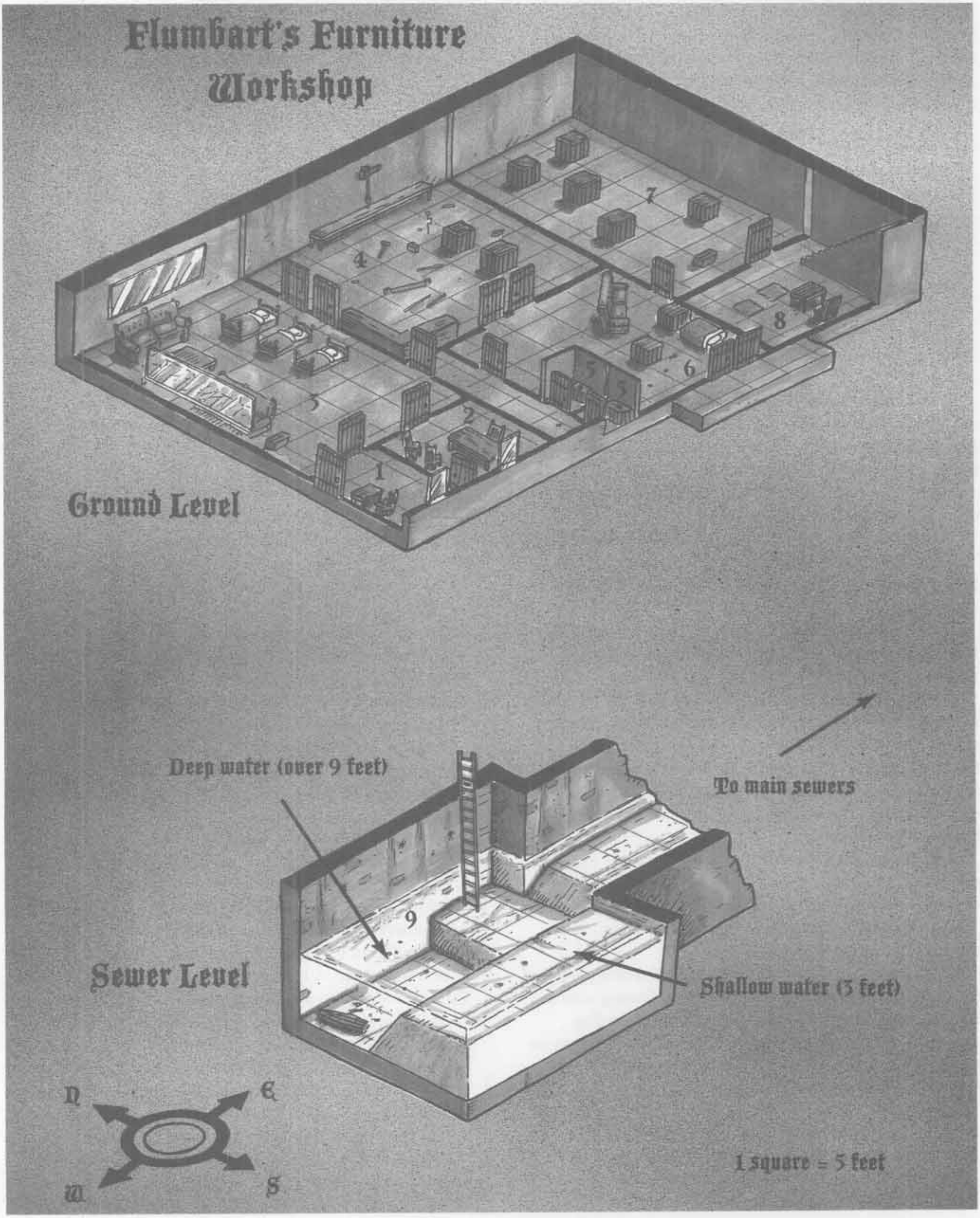
If things get too dangerous for Ezra, he abandons his companions and flees below to the sewers through a secret stairwell. Behind the table a set of stairs rises to an attic.

Attic: (not shown on map) Stairs from the interview room (Area 8) lead up to a dusty attic, where Jobar the half-ogre and his dogs sleep during the day. A small window gives a little bit of daylight and ventilation. If encountered up here, Jobar has a –2 penalty on his attacks due to the shortened ceiling.

9. Ezra's Lair: A ladder from area 8 extends down 20 feet, leading to a small, dark chamber that opens onto the sewers. Light reveals that the entire chamber glistens with murky sewer runoff.

The overpowering smell from this area forces the heroes to successfully save vs. poison or become badly nauseated (–2 to attack rolls and +2 to AC; making the save imposes only half this penalty).

Pieces of trash and dung float in the far west side. Lurking under the surface is the guardian of Ezra's coffin, a sewer fiend. Once the first hero enters, the


Flumbart's Furniture Workshop
Ground Level
1
2
3
4
5
5
6
7
8
Sewer Level
9
Deep water (over 9 feet)
To main sewers
Shallow water (3 feet)
N
E
W
S
1 square = 5 feet

fiend erupts from the sewage and attempts to grapple a victim.

Sewer fiend: AC 5; MV 6; hp 55; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/1d8; SA Successful attacks by both limbs result in the fiend hugging the victim for 2d6 hp damage, 15% chance of giving the victim a debilitating (60%) or fatal (40%) disease; SD Never surprised; SZ Large (8' tall); Int Average (10); ML Fanatic (17); XP 975.

The sewer fiend is a new monster, a light brown, man-shaped beast with three eyes, one mounted on a stalk similar to that of an otyugh. It has two massive arms the size of hams, but no legs—only a formless, slug-like trunk. Its head is blocky and equipped with large, sharp molars. It looks, and may well be descended from some twisted breeder's experiment crossing neo-otyughs and bears.

While the party fights the monster, Ezra attacks from the rear. Five rounds later, his 1d6 summoned alligators join the fray. If Ezra drops below 25 hit points, he plunges into the nasty water and takes on his alligator form. Should he fall below zero hit points, he dissolves into liquid and flows away to one of his coffins.

Alligators (1d6): AC 5; MV 6; Sw 12; HD 3; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/1d12 (tail); SA Surprise (–2 penalty to opponents' surprise roll); SZ Large (9' long); Int Animal (1); ML Average (9); AL N; XP 65 each.

Beneath the surface is Ezra's primary coffin. Because it is filled with sewage, it is quite heavy (about 2,000 lbs). If the heroes use appropriate spells (such as *levitate*) and/or the block and tackle in Area 5, they can get the coffin out of the sewers and into the workshop above. Inside is a week's worth of loot: 320 gp, 654 sp, a bag with five pieces of jewelry (total value 1,000 gp), and a sack with three gems (rubies, total value 1,400 gp).

Conclusion

For one so necessary to the Thieves Guild, Flumbart is surprisingly weak. He relies heavily on his charisma and Ezra's good will. Only in a life-or-death situation does Flumbart actually fight, and then he uses his poisoned letter opener to even the odds. Generally, he flees dangerous circumstances, considering himself far too important to risk injury. He willingly sacrifices any one else if it will better his chances of survival. Killing the elf causes Ezra's Thieves Guild to collapse.

In addition to attacking Flumbart, the heroes can damage Ezra's empire by destroying the workshop/ Thieves Guild headquarters. Losing the workshop to fire or explosion might cause Flumbart to suggest to his boss that they start over in a new city.

Before Muntox Oresmelter tells the heroes the legend he promised to recount, he requires hard proof that the party did what they promised (for instance, evidence of Flumbart's demise, burning the workshop).

The metalsmith looks around carefully, though no one is paying your group the least attention. "This legend came by way of my granfa, who was a bucket boy in the Nirka mines. I'll swear to any god ye name it's truth...or it was, when he was a lad."

Muntox pulls a heavily chased gold cuff from his vest. The workmanship is old dwarven. Winking in the metal are three tiny chips of stone.

"Granfa said stones like these, fire opals, held the way to another world from this land. You must have five unflawed stones, a rare treasure. These be chips, capped with quartz to magnify the fire.

"Then, you must pray over them, and pray true. Finally, you must wholly desire to reach your destination. If you've done it right, the gems fall in a straight line which leads you on a path to your desire."

The smith shakes his head. "It's a dangerous journey, the tales say. And, aside from the bully-boys," here he nods to you, "which no longer trouble me, I've a liking for this place. Me shop's here; me customers.

"They used to mine fire opals at Nirka, before the spirits came. Likely there's still some there. Opals, that is, and spirits, too."

Recurrence

If the heroes merely capture Flumbart, Ezra uses whatever forces he can muster to rescue his lieutenant from the fate the heroes have planned (for example, they might intend to turn him over to the authorities or take him to another domain). Depending on what else the heroes accomplished, this means there might be guild members, alligators, and even the nosferatu himself on their tails.

If they kill the elf or destroy the furniture workshop, Ezra decides to get out of town. After several months, the adventurers might hear of another city experiencing Ezra's brand of thievery and extortion. The nosferatu has been set back by the loss of his lieutenant and the need to relocate. If the heroes can track him down, he might prove vulnerable enough for them to vanquish...or he might have lined up a whole new entourage of lieutenants and monsters.

Truly, certain crystals and gems
are attuned to specific places . . .
consider those referenced in
Trimia's Catalogue of Outer Plane Artifacts
. . . like the special blood-red coals
which are said to lead one to the Nine Hells,
if properly used.
I wonder, does that mean these fire opals
lead to one place, or is it the
location of use that determines
the portal's destination?

—From Mulger's notes on
magical objects and travel

Mulger D'Ajust

Mulger D'Ajust

Biography

Throughout his life, Mulger D'Ajust has been an oddity. In his mortal life, this dwarf found himself drawn to magical study. Today, this obsession remains a more powerful force for Mulger than even his own vampiric nature.

Appearance

Mulger D'Ajust is a 4 foot, 4 inch tall dwarf who, at 130 lbs., seems unusually slender for his race. His intense, solid-black eyes, which glitter with obsession, dominate his small, sallow face. He has a long, slightly unkempt, silver beard. His fingers are stained black with ink. He wears a voluminous black robe, which conceals his many pockets. Over his shoulder hangs a large pack, filled with parchment, pens, and inks.

Mulger D'Ajust

Dwarven Vampire, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	0	Str	15
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	+3	Con	12
Hit Points	65	Int	18
THAC0	13	Wis	17
No. of Attacks	2	Cha	13
Morale	15	XP	3,000

Damage/Attack: 1d4+4 (touch) or 1d8 (axe).

Special Attacks: Commands 12 wolverines (they arrive in 1d6 turns), commands undead slaves, Intelligence drain (2 points per touch), fear gaze (victim must successfully save vs. fear with –2 penalty).

Special Defenses: Large creatures suffer –4 penalty on attack rolls, +5 bonus on all saving throws, hit by only +2 or better magical weapons, regenerates 4 hp per round while in subterranean area, immune to all mind-affecting spells, poisons, and drowning, half damage only from cold or electricity spells, unaffected by sunlight and holy water.

Special Weaknesses: Cannot use magical items of any sort, suffers 2d4 points of damage per round from natural spring water, cannot cross line of powdered metal, cannot enter structure not made in part of stone or earth.

Other Abilities: Has natural underground racial abilities of dwarves—able to see in all but absolute darkness as if full daylight in addition to infravision, able to *stonewalk* (for example, travel through any thickness of stone or earth as if it were air).



Background

As a youth, Mulger was far more interested in discovering the secrets of the world around him than in living in it. He apprenticed to a master miner, learning the intricacies of metallurgy, gemology, and geology, but soon surpassed his teacher. He resisted pressures to take up a trade, finally leaving his home to seek knowledge among the other races.

Inevitably, he spent time with sorcerers and wizards, who tended to be the most learned. Mulger cast aside his prejudice against the magical arts, finding their secrets irresistible. While unable to use magic himself, Mulger began studying the interrelation between magic and physical objects. He traveled to many lands to record magical objects and observe the wizards who used them. He was obsessive and unrelenting, often undertaking dangerous searches in the name of scholarship.

One winter, Mulger tried to cross a mountain pass, ordering his companions to press onward despite a howling blizzard. They abandoned him to the snow and his mania. He trudged on, yelling that he would not stop for Death itself. Nearly frozen, still cursing his

mortal weakness, Mulger stepped off a cliff into the swirling snow and was taken by the Mists to Darkon.

Azalin heard Mulger's curses and was interested—the lich was always looking for help with his research. Azalin sent several of his secret police, the Kargat, to ambush Mulger and turn him into a vampire slave. The dwarf was too weak to resist.

While he hated being a slave, Mulger was mollified by the wealth of resources before him. Eventually his research led him to a way to free his will from Azalin's control. He did so, and Azalin did not protest, finding Mulger more useful as an ally than a slave.

Mulger continued to work primarily for Azalin, since the lich not only paid well for information, but also supplied undead assistants, who were both efficient and quiet.

When the lich disappeared in the fiery conflagration that devastated Il Aluk, Mulger refused to believe that his chief patron was lost. Instead, the dwarf continues his research, confident that Azalin will reappear. When the lord eventually resurfaces, Mulger knows that his own preparedness will earn some kind of reward.

Personality

An obsessive, selfish scholar, Mulger is merciless with failure and intolerant of distraction, which is why he uses undead servants despite his natural aversion to such creatures. Mulger neglects his own bodily needs, feeling revulsion for his vampiric form. Any mention of his condition angers him. He feeds only when the need becomes so great that he can no longer ignore it.

When dealing with individuals of greater skill or power, Mulger acts ingratiating and conciliatory. He willingly makes any deal necessary to get what he wants or to preserve his existence. However, he readily uses his abilities to take what he wants, if he is able.

Combat

Mulger considers direct combat a waste of his precious time. He either uses his undead attendants to repel intruders or enemies, or summons a pack of wolverines to defend him and his work. Only as a last resort does Mulger enter combat. He can use an axe with fair skill, though he is no match for one of his own kind.

Should all else fail, Mulger uses his *stonewalk* ability to escape. When trapped, he negotiates, offering any amount of knowledge in exchange for his freedom.

The Way Out

This adventure is for four to six characters levels 7–10 (about 43 total levels). A well-balanced adventuring party is recommended, preferably one with either a magic user or unusual magic artifact the owner is willing to demonstrate.

This scenario is designed to run after *Guild of Thieves*, on page 78, in which the dwarf Muntox Oresmelter mentions a great treasure in the caves of Mount Nirka. It can also be run independently, with the heroes perhaps responding to a cry for help from Tempest Falls.

Background

Mulger currently continues to research and mine crystals for Azalin, who needed near-perfect quality specimens to conduct a very important ritual. It is unclear whether Mulger's belief in the lich's return stems from respect for Azalin's power, or derives from Mulger's greed for his potential reward. Azalin promised Mulger an ancient tome on the history of magic in exchange for 13 flawless anthodite crystals.

Anthodite crystals develop only within natural subterranean vacuums, which occur in the caves under Mount Nirka in eastern Darkon, an area too remote to feel the effects of the disaster at Il Aluk.

Since these natural vacuums are typically surrounded by pockets of spring water (which is harmful to the dwarven vampire), Azalin had given Mulger a special powder to turn the graveyard dead of a nearby human village into mindless slaves. Mulger sent his pack of wolverines to accompany the undead crew to the mines in order to discourage any curious or outraged villagers.

The slaves have been working for about two weeks at this point. Mulger must reapply the powder every 12 hours. When he takes breaks, Mulger locks the zombies in a former slave pen. (The mine shut down long ago due to rumors that ghosts haunted the mined-out tunnels.)

Thus far, Mulger has found eight pure crystals, and is working on an area his calculations predict should hold that final five he needs.

While inside the mines exploring for crystals, Mulger has also discovered a interesting phenomenon—a portal that seems independent of the Mists. Mulger is fairly certain that the gateway would permit a traveler to choose any destination desired. He plans to explore this possibility once he finishes the mining.

The Adventure Begins

The adventurers follow the information from the dwarf Muntox Oresmelter (received at the conclusion of *Guild*

of Thieves), which implies that a series of gems in the mines of Mount Nirka, if used a certain way, point to a magical portal that leads out of this world.

Prior to reaching the mines, the heroes arrive at the small mountain village of Tempest Falls. If the adventurers stop to investigate the place or to top up their supplies, use the *Tempest Falls Tragedy* encounter. If they immediately head on to the mines, pick up the story at *The Mines of Mount Nirka*.

If this adventure is being played separately from *Guild of Thieves*, you could have the heroes learn the legend of a possible escape route from this land of Mists from a passing sage, bard, or Vistana fortune teller:

"I have heard that there is a way to another world from this land, but to get there requires a rare treasure. First, you must find five opals that shine like fire, bright and true. Then, you must pray over them with sincerity, and invoking the name of your god with fervor. Know well your heart's destination, or the wind will be your guide. If all is done properly, the gems will fall in a straight line which leads you on a path to a better place.

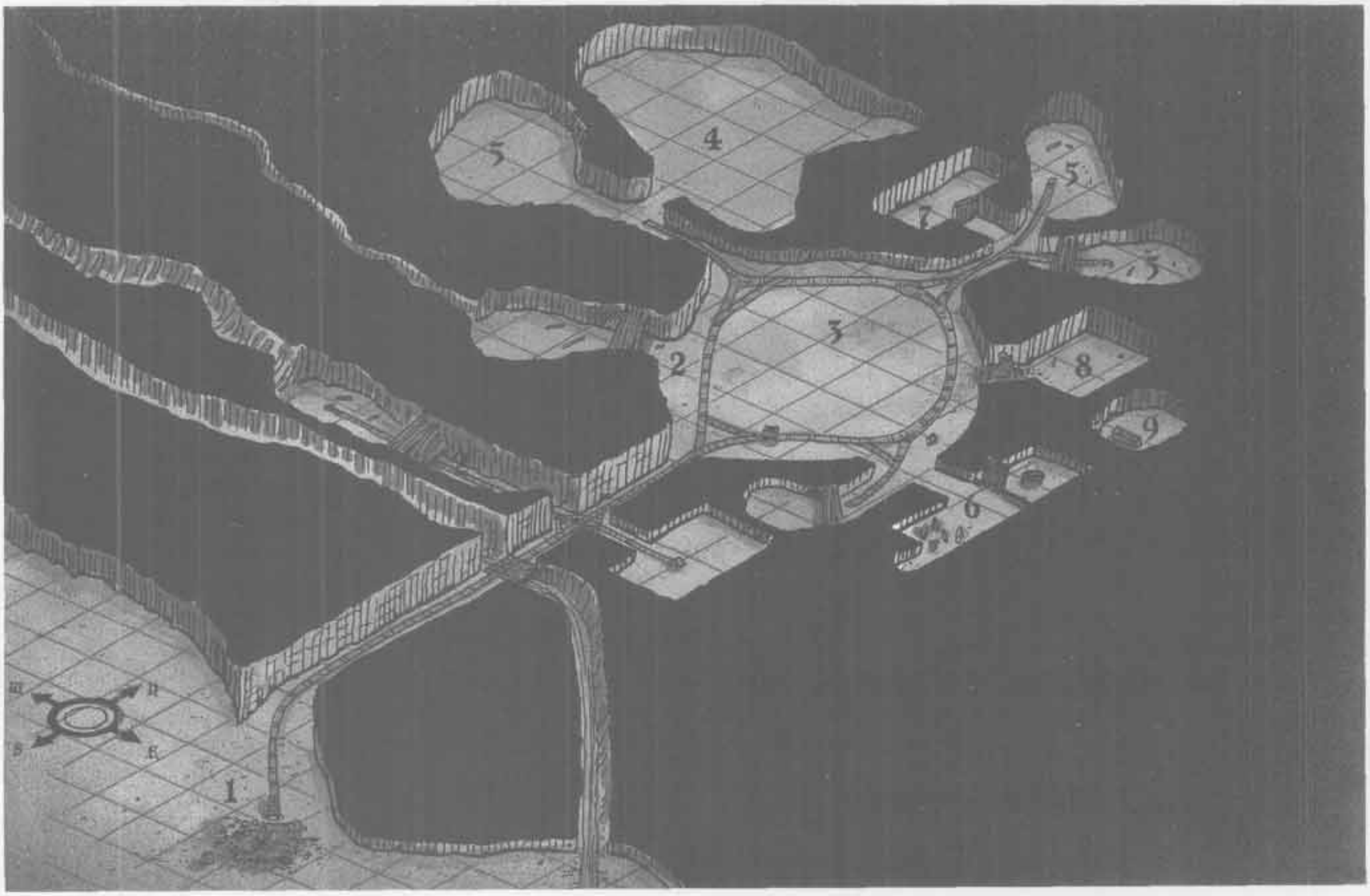
"Fire opals are the rarest of gems. It is said that the dwarves of Darkon mined gems, including an occasional fire opal, some years ago, but their mines at the base of Mount Nirka have become haunted by a vengeful spirit."

Tempest Falls Tragedy

No villagers roam the streets of this small town. The inhabitants keep all the doors and windows tightly shuttered, and thickly adorn them with religious symbols of a variety of faiths.

A stocky dwarf finally opens the door to the Red Griffin Inn in answer to the heroes' knocks. He regards them with open distrust and demands that the heroes prove that they are alive before he lets them inside. Once the heroes establish this (by pricking themselves and bleeding, etc.), the innkeeper ushers them in and bars the door again.

Over stout beer and hearty stew, the innkeeper explains that a few weeks ago, in the wee hours, the dead rose and marched upon the abandoned mines of Mount Nirka. A few of the local folk tried to halt the ghastly ranks, but were viciously slain by a horde of rabid wolverines. The innkeeper makes a holy gesture



and refers to the legend of Darkon that speaks of a time when the undead will rise against the living and take back their land. He advises the heroes to stay indoors or to leave the way they came quickly, lest the undead overtake them.

If offered a large sum of gold or precious gems, the innkeeper sells the party an old map of the mines (the map shows all but Areas 5 and 6). As he hands over the faded parchment, he warns the heroes that the mines mean only death.

The Mines of Mount Nirka

The road up to the mines narrows often with the clutter of rubble and fallen trees. The last few miles are passable only on foot. If you want to throw a random encounter at the party, see *Domains and Denizens* in the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* boxed set for appropriate lurking creatures.

The entrance to the mines is dark and dank, overrun with vines and branches. Rubble half-blocks the tunnel mouth. The air from the tunnel smells slightly of decay.

1. Tunnels: The heroes can walk two abreast in most of the tunnels; however, tall heroes (above six feet) have to stoop, since the tunnels were built to accommodate dwarves. The tunnel walls and ceilings are shored up with timbers. Some tunnels have iron tracks, clearly marked on the map. The map shows only one cart, though, indicating a small mining operation. (Without the map, heroes must discover these facts on their own.)

The cart, once used to remove excess dirt, is nowhere to be seen. For every turn the party remains in a track-covered area, there is a one in ten chance that the mine car arrives, pushed by two human zombies.

The heroes can stop the cart (60 Strength points required), derail it, or climb over the top and attack the zombies (though only one hero per round can mount the cart in this narrow track).

Zombies, human male (2): AC 8; MV 6; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD Spell immunity; Int Average (9); SZ Medium (5', 11"); ML Unsteady (8); AL NE; XP 65 each.

2. Barriers: Well constructed earthen and wood barriers block abandoned passage ways. These are prime areas for further development if you wish to expand this adventure into a subterranean campaign.

3.Track Branches: In this large excavated area, the mine cart track circles the perimeter; four branches lead into darker passages. A simple switch controls each junction.

4. Work Area: The sound of metal striking rock gets louder. The air smells moist and dank with a sickly-sweet undercurrent of rot. Throughout the caverns, teams of zombies (50 total) heft pickaxes at the slippery stone. Stagnant water puddles into mud at various points along the floor. From a large rock, Mulger directs the zombies' work in clipped, impatient tones.

The adventurers have a 75% chance of finding the zombies and Mulger at work here. Otherwise, the area is still and vacant.

If the heroes approach quietly, they can overhear Mulger fretting about the crystals and about Azalin, revealing to the heroes the number of the crystals needed and the fact that the crystals are for the lich, who had better return soon to claim and pay for this effort, no matter where in the planes he might have gone.

Should the heroes make noise or attack, Mulger orders the zombies to counterattack using their tools. As the zombies engage the heroes, the dwarven vampire summons 2d6 wolverines, who arrive within 1d6 turns. After that Mulger sinks into the earth, using his *stonewalk* ability to watch the heroes. He drains any isolated adventurers if he can do so without possible harm to himself.

Zombies, human male and female (30): AC 8; MV 6; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD Spell immunity; Int Average (9); SZ Medium (5'–6'); ML Unsteady (8) AL NE; XP 65 each.

Wolverines (12): AC 5; MV 12; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4+1; Int Low (6); SZ Medium; ML Steady (12); AL N; XP 120 each.

In the event that the heroes kill the zombies, Mulger *stonewalks* to his storage chamber (Area 9) to protect the gathered crystals.

5. Mined Out Area: The slaves worked this area until there were no more gems in the vicinity. As the heroes enter, a wall suddenly collapses, revealing two umber hulks, who have burrowed close in search of living meat.

Umber hulks (2): AC 2; MV 6, Br 1d6; hp 55 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 3d4/3d4/1d10; SA Looking into creature's eyes causes confusion; SW Poor balance in wide spaces; Other: Infravision 90'; Int Average (9); SZ Large (8' tall, 5' wide); ML Elite (13); AL CE; XP 4,000 each.

6. Miner's Quarters: A dozen humanoid bodies lie tossed about the room like rag dolls. Mulger uses this area to feed, discarding his victims absently within the room. A fireplace vents into a small natural shaft that comes out the side of Mount Nirka. In an unlocked storage room are boxes of dry goods (usable, value 200 gp) and an untapped keg of beer in good shape (value 50 gp).

7. Holding Pen: Once a storage area for equipment, this room now serves as a pen for the zombies when Mulger takes a break from mining. If the zombies were not in the work area, then all 50 of them are here. When someone opens the door, the zombies pour out, milling about aimlessly, attacking only if something gets in their way.

Left on their own, the zombies eventually wander out of the mine and back to the graveyard in Tempest Falls.

8. Storage Chamber: In the tunnel is the outline of a door, which looks like it has recently been sealed with mud. The door is too strong to break through using weapons or sheer physical strength.

Behind the door lies a chamber where Mulger keeps the gathered crystals. He carried the precious crystals into the room using his *stonewalk* ability.

In addition to the crystals, Mulger has a number of other gems stored in this room, including five perfect fire opals.

9. Sarcophagus: In the stone wall, Mulger has dug out a niche in which to store his stone sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus can be reached using appropriate spells (for example, *dig, dimension door, teleport*); however, the caster must determine the exact location of the sarcophagus, or he risks getting trapped in solid stone. Mulger, being able to travel through stone at will, didn't leave much leeway.

Destroying Mulger's resting place enrages the dwarven vampire, since he stores his precious tomes on magical research in a dug-out space under the sarcophagus.

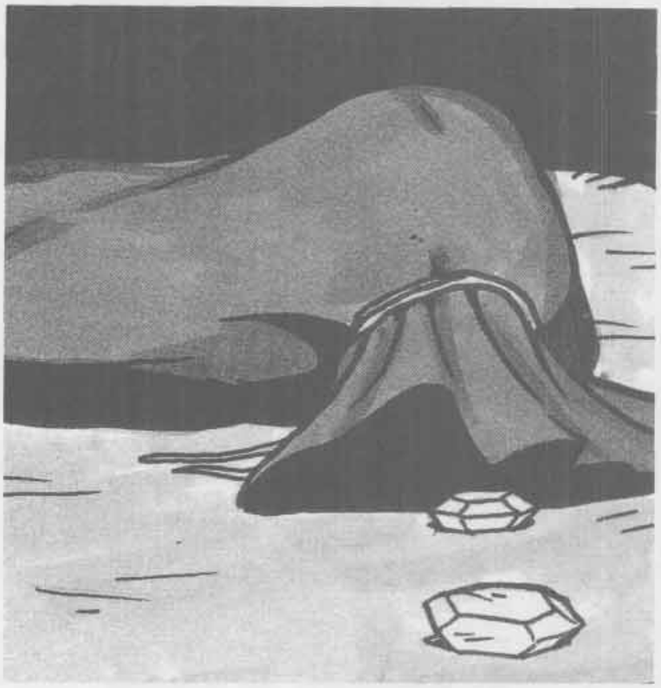
Secret Portal

You can decide whether the heroes leave Ravenloft at the end of this adventure, or if this scenario is but one part of the puzzle to finding a true "way out." Note that any portal that leads out of Ravenloft should be temporary and difficult to access repeatedly (otherwise the knowledge becomes too powerful.)

To control the power of this discovery, you could limit the how the device works (for example, the user may need a recent object or person from the realm to which they wish to travel in order to open a temporary portal, or the person conducting the ritual must be a cleric from the desired realm).

If you choose to have the ritual work in Mount Nirka, you could have the gems show the "way out" by falling in a line that points to the open portal, but does not reveal where the portal leads (allowing you to select the location).

Perhaps the fire opals project a map that shows the adventurers the location of the now-open portal. This interpretation sends the party on a quest to find the actual portal.



Finally, as mentioned in his background, Mulger is interested in researching the portal. In line with his recurring character, you might make the dwarven sage's interest intertwine with the heroes' desires. They both are investigating the same possibilities, and they each have information for the other. Should the heroes try to bribe Mulger into divulging his research, or are they racing him to find a way to another world—possibly the same one?

Recurrence

Mulger can appear anytime, anywhere, pursuing magical research. He is frequently nearby when strong magic is present. His *stonewalk* ability makes him very difficult to kill, as he can hide in solid rock.

The dwarf can serve both as an enemy (depending on who or what Mulger researches) and as an uneasy information source on obscure magic and metal lore. He could even help them investigate the portal—if the heroes can offer him enough treasure to persuade him to reveal his knowledge.

Over time, you should allow the heroes to discover Mulger's weaknesses so that someday, if they are so inclined, they can hunt and kill the dwarven vampire. Integrate clues into each encounter with Mulger (for example, have a natural stalactite fall, causing Mulger to flee with unnatural fear, or have Mulger negotiate with the heroes to get a desired object out of a pool of natural spring water, since immersion in the water would kill him).

Hala is the goddess of healing. What place is there for earthly love in such a calling? That kind of love is a cancer, corrupting the mind through the body. The only vow I have taken, or would wish to take, is to purify the world from disease.

—Marla, on whether those in her order may marry

Marla

Biography

Marla is a penanggalan as described in the *Monstrous Compendium: Fiend Folio® Appendix*. The relevant pages are reproduced at the end of the adventure.

Appearance

Marla appears to be a fit, unassuming cleric clad in light blue robes. A lead, eight-sided star hangs around her neck—the symbol of her faith. She stands 5 feet, 5 inches tall. She keeps her light brown hair wrapped in a bun, and her smile causes pronounced dimples. Her light blue eyes match her robes. A hawk-shaped brand covers her forehead—all Falkovnians are marked with the brand at birth.

At night, Marla assumes her penanggalan form, detaching her head from her body. While in her penanggalan form, Marla's eyes stare wildly, her teeth elongate to vicious points, and a long, slimy black tail at the base of her head twitches chaotically and snaps like a whip.

Marla

Penanggalan, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	7	Str	18/76
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	15
Hit Points	63	Int	10
THAC0	14	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Morale	11	XP	5,000

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (+4 from 18/74 Str)

Special Abilities: (head form only) Blood drain (1d6 hp plus 1 point of Strength and Constitution), sight of the head form causes victim to save vs. spell or be overcome with fear, hypnotic attack on sleeping victims (–3 to saving throw; additional –1 on subsequent nights), sight of head detaching from body requires save vs. death magic (failure results in victim falling unconscious for 24 hours and being feebleminded for three days; success means that victim is feebleminded until dawn).

Special Defenses: Regenerates 1 hp per round, immune to holy symbols and turning (in human form), immune to *detect lie* spells, head form turned as wraith, immune to mind-affecting spells, head has full hit points when detaching, regardless of body damage.

Special Weaknesses: Head form is paralyzed if exposed to sunlight—if not reunited within seven hours after exposure, both head and body start to decay.

Spells: *cure light wounds, command.*



Head form: AC 8; MV Fl 18 (B); HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d4.

Background

Marla belonged to the Sisters of Grace, an order in Ravenloft that serves Hala, a neutrally aligned goddess of healing. Marla's parents tried to flee Falkovnia without permission and were killed for their insolence. The sisters took in the orphan. As a young woman, she exhibited such a pure devotion to Hala that the Mother Superior started grooming Marla to replace her.

However, Marla's future changed when a handsome, dark-eyed man sought shelter at the monastery during a snowstorm. Marla gave the man dry clothes and food, and, after one look in his eyes, she fell helplessly in love. That night, the stranger shared her bed.

During the week, the storm raged. Marla and the stranger had many secret liaisons. One night, Marla decided to resign from the order and leave with the stranger, because she realized she loved him more than Hala.

As she reached the door to his quarters, Marla stopped, puzzled to hear sounds of affection within. Quietly, she peered inside and witnessed the handsome

stranger embrace Sister Bernadette. Aghast, she listened as he uttered the same tender lies he had told her.

Angry beyond words, Marla prayed in her cell for the strength to handle this betrayal. Her anger only grew stronger. Suddenly, Marla leapt up, grabbing a knife as murderous thoughts seethed in her brain. As she turned, she found her faithless lover had come to her.

"I could hear your thoughts," he whispered, gliding into her cell. All anger left, as she once again was filled with love for him. As he embraced her, she contemplated the beauty of the batlike wings unfolding from his shoulders. "I am not the one you hate. They are the faithless ones, and I shall help you punish them."

Marla's screams echoed throughout the monastery. The other sisters tried to break down her cell door, but were driven away by a thick, red smoke that poured out from under it, filling the hallway. And still Marla screamed.

The smoke didn't clear until the screaming stopped. The door opened, revealing a horrifying sight: Marla's head floated in mid-air, a black, whip-like tail twitching where her spine should be. Behind her the winged stranger, covered in blood, shifted a sickle from one hand to the other and grinned. Between the two of them, they left no survivors.

Afterward, Marla's head reunited with her body. The handsome stranger, wings now gone, kissed her on the cheek, and said, "I have much work yet to do, my dear. I will call on you again."

Personality

Marla has been a penanggalan for only six months. Her entire existence revolves around a burning hatred of love and affection. Not yet realizing that she has all eternity to wipe out "love," Marla hastily and vengefully attacks any loving couples she finds.

Marla herself is unable to display any affection or love. Although she frequently smiles, there is no warmth behind it.

Combat

Like most penanggalans, Marla prefers to avoid direct combat. If the victim awakens during her attack or someone else intrudes, she flees.

The only time Marla becomes aggressive is in defense of her headless body. She arrives at her body's hidden location 1d4 rounds after it has been discovered.

If attacked in her "human" form, Marla defends herself with a mace.

Love Lies Dying

This adventure is for four to six characters, levels 4–7, about 33 total levels. The party should include at least one priest, as well as a female hero or a pair of heroes who are in love and outwardly affectionate. If it does not, the pair of nonplayer character lovers described below serve as Marla's targets.

Background

The area around the monastery is deserted. The peasants have fled, spooked by rumors of a mysterious monster and the odd disappearance of Hala's priestesses.

Marla currently preys on travelers. She offers them shelter at the monastery, providing food and warm beds. Her typical cover story is that she is a lowly acolyte, left behind to tend the monastery while the members of the order are out curing a plague in a nearby town.

She assigns each visitor to a separate room, so that she can attack each individually. Marla targets victims in the following order: the female with the highest Charisma, followed by anyone else who displays love or affection, then other females, and finally other males.

She prefers to slay her victims slowly, over a series of evenings, while in her detached head form. In the depths of the night, Marla enters the room, hypnotizing her victim before approaching. The victim must successfully save vs. spell with a –3 penalty or the penanggalan starts feeding. Marla drains the same person every night (each subsequent time gaining an additional –1 penalty to the saving throw) until that person dies.

If the visitors try to leave, Marla finds reasons to detain them, such as surreptitiously injuring a person's mount, suggesting that the order's library holds great magical knowledge, or begging the visitors to help her bury anyone who passes on in the night.

The Adventure Begins

While traveling an isolated stretch of road, on a day when storm clouds have been hanging low and threatening in the sky all day, the heroes notice the following:

> Under the darkened sky, a group of mounted, sword-wielding warriors surround a young couple on foot. The girl sprawls on the ground, her skirts spread out around her, terror marring her face. A young man stands by her, dagger in hand. "Can't you just leave us be?" he shouts.

"Silence!" cries the lead rider, his dark cloak catching in the wind as he raises his sword to strike at the young man.

Give the heroes a chance to act. If they take no action, the cloaked man knocks the young man to the ground using the flat of his sword. The girl lunges between them, shrieking, "Please! Don't hurt him!" The lead rider gestures for another man to grab the girl. She kicks and screams, trying to break free, as she is handed to the lead rider, who whispers something to her. The girl falls instantly silent.

If the heroes have not yet acted, the girl appeals to them for help. As soon as she does, the leader orders the other four men to "deal" with the heroes, regardless of their response.

Should the heroes intervene, using a surprise attack, such as an arrow shot at the lead rider, the other men attack the heroes with gusto.

However, if the heroes call challenges to the men, the lead rider says in an imperious tone, "This is not your concern, peasants. Be on your way." He refers to the heroes as peasants, regardless of their attire.

Lead rider, human male, fifth-level fighter: AC 5 (chain); MV 12; hp 31; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword +1, 17 Strength); SZ Medium (5', 10" tall); ML Elite (14); AL LN; XP 270.

S 17, D13, C11, I 14, W 9, Ch 10.

Men-at-arms (4): AC 5 (chain); MV 12; F2; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short swords); SZ Medium (6' tall); Int Average (10); ML Elite (14); AL N; XP 65 each.

War horse, light (5): AC 7; MV 24; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg: 1d4/1d4; SZ Large; Int Animal (1); ML Unsteady (7); AL N; XP 35 each.

As the heroes engage the riders, a bolt of lightning streaks across the sky, and a torrential downpour begins.

As soon as one rider goes down in melee combat, roll a morale check for the entire NPC group. A failed morale check means they flee. As he wheels his mount, the leader warns the heroes that they've made a grave error.

The couple thanks the heroes profusely.

The Truth of the Matter

Although the riders appeared to be villains, they were, in fact, retainers under orders from their lord to retrieve his eloping daughter.

The young couple—Piotr and Mickilina—admit to the truth of the situation, portraying Mickilina's father as a harsh, cruel man who wishes to keep them from marrying—which to them is a fate worse than death.

They ask the heroes to escort them to the Sisters of Grace's compound nearby, saying the sisters will protect them.

Even if the heroes want to avoid this situation, inform them that the local monastery is the only shelter for miles.

Arrival

When the drenched group reaches the monastery, it seems deserted. As they enter the compound, Marla emerges, a shawl thrown over her head. She invites the party in for some hot soup. Heroes unfamiliar with Falkovnia might be surprised by her brand, but Marla is perfectly willing to talk about it.

The young couple reveal their plight, asking Marla to grant them Hala's protection. She consents, saying that she expects the rest of the Order to return soon from their mission to cure a plague in a nearby village.

Marla engages the heroes in an animated conversation, playing a lonely young acolyte in need of company. The whole time, the couple holds hands, exchanging longing glances.

After a while, Marla shows each traveler to a small room. She apologizes for the meagerness of the furnishings, but says that it is all they have. Marla leaves, saying, "May Hala protect you from the plague."

Attacks in the Night

If the heroes set up a guard rotation, the hero standing second watch is attacked by two men, who are trying to retrieve Mickilina.

Men-at-arms (2): AC 5 (chain); MV 12; F2; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short swords); SZ Medium (6' tall); ML Elite (14); Int Average (10); AL N; XP 65 each.

The rest of the night passes uneventfully. If the heroes explore, the *The Sisters of Grace Hospice* explains what they find.

The Plague

Come morning, everyone is awakened by Piotr screaming. The heroes rush in to find Mickilina dead. Her skin is unnaturally pale. A close look reveals two small cuts on her neck.

In a few minutes, Marla appears, carrying a tray of tea and biscuits. Her expression goes blank when she sees Mickilina, and she says, "The plague—I was hoping it would spare you." Marla asks the heroes to stay and help her with the burial.

The Sisters of Grace Hospice

Here are brief details about some of the rooms in the hospice, in case the heroes go exploring.

- **Gate and Walls:** The walls are thick and tall (about 8 feet). The tall, metal gate appears rusted in spots. (The rust is actually dried blood.)
- **Sanctuary:** This room is dominated by a huge eight-sided star on the front wall. The pulpit and benches are in perfect order. Under the pulpit lies a secret trap door that leads to underground storage. An over-powering stench of death fills the room. The bodies of the dead sisters (placed here by Marla) lie in a pile. Entering requires a horror check. The room contains magical and healing supplies: five *potions of extra-healing*, a jar of *Keoghtem's ointment* (four applications), and a scroll (*cure disease* ×3, and *bless* ×2), all at 15th level.
- **Library:** This mid-sized room contains many dusty scrolls and books, focusing on the healing arts.
- **Barracks:** There are 20 spartan rooms.
- **Visitor Rooms:** There are eight small rooms, each furnished with a bed, a night stand, and a wardrobe. The room has a window and barely holds one person.
- **Garden:** Although the garden has recently been hoed, no plants grow here. Marla explains she is waiting for the new crops to sprout. In actuality, out of respect, the penanggalan buried the Mother Superior here.
- **Storehouse:** One side is a smokehouse containing hams and sides of beef. The other side holds grains and vegetables.
- **Kitchen:** This room is well equipped with ovens, fireplaces, utensils, and condiments. At night, Marla hides her body under sackcloth in the pantry. Finding the headless body requires a horror check. Marla's detached head arrives 1d4 rounds after her body has been discovered, in order to protect it from harm.

Ending the Adventure

The heroes can resolve this scenario in a number of ways. Marla can chose another victim, who initially suffers disturbing dreams. If the heroes try to cure the affected person, it does not work. Marla suggests they might find a cure in the library.

If the heroes need a clue, Piotr can stumble across Marla in her head form. His screams wake the entire compound. The heroes find Piotr lying on the floor, gibbering madly about a "bird of prey." (This is a reference to Marla's brand.) Marla does not appear during the commotion.

While the party searches for the source of Piotr's madness, Marla shadows and attacks any lone heroes. If they locate the headless body, the penanggalan fights them until either she or the party dies.

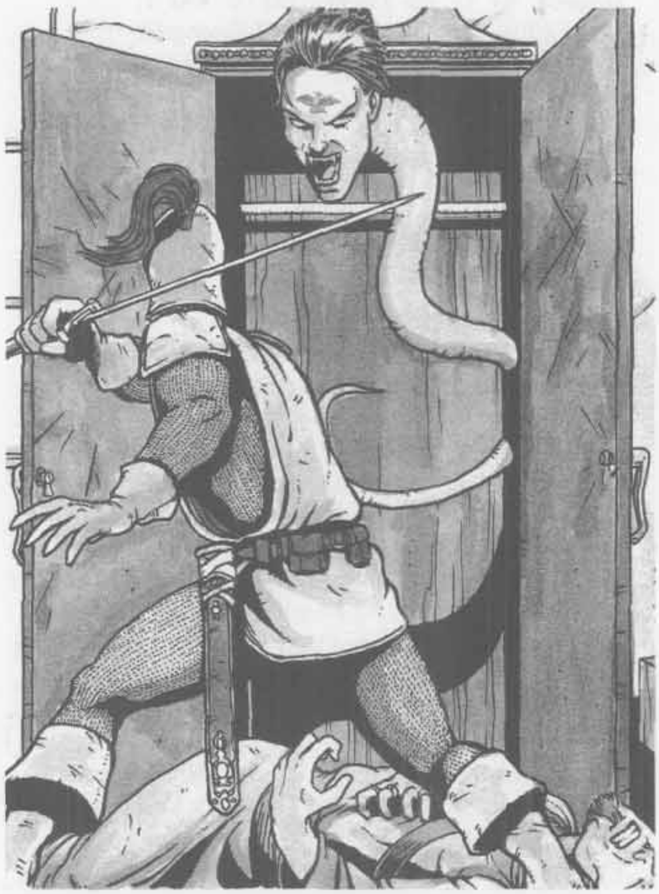
Recurrence

If heroes do not discover or destroy Marla during this adventure, they may run across her again practically anywhere. The penanggalan kills whenever she can, targeting lovers in particular.

For example, the heroes might find her posing as a priestess offering to marry young couples. After gaining the couple's trust, she suggests going on a secluded, single-night retreat to pray. During the night, she attacks and kills the couple, then moves to a new area.

In addition, you can have Mickilina rise on the third night after her death, a new penanggalan. (Most likely the rest of Marla's order was carved up, not drained, when they were killed, but the possibility exists that one of those women has also risen.) Since penanggalans are solitary creatures, neither Mickilina nor a former priestess would stay at the monastery while Marla was active.

Though only women are at risk to communicate this particular vampirism, a single penanggalan in a village can "infect" a great many victims in a short while if unchecked.



Penanggalan

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Blood
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10, 8 with head detached
MOVEMENT:	12; head detaches Fl 18 (B)
HIT DICE:	Body variable; head 4
THAC0:	16
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 or by weapon type/1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Blood drain
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	M (5'–6')
MORALE:	Steady (11)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	1,400

A female vampire variant of great power and horrifying appearance, a penanggalan appears during daylight hours as an attractive human female of any character class. This person retains the aspect of the victim before its death and transformation.

At night, a penanggalan assumes its true form. Its head detaches from its body, rising vertically and flying off in search of human, preferably female, prey upon which to feast. Dangling beneath the head is a 3 to 4 foot long, slimy black tail, which tapers to a point at one end. A penanggalan's eyes glow red in conditions of near-total and total darkness.

Combat: In human form, the creature fights and acts in a manner appropriate to her apparent class and level, with most abilities undiminished. Thus, if she was a wizard in life, she can cast spells; if a thief, she can pick pockets. However, in the instance that the penanggalan was a paladin before death, she is considered a normal fighter of appropriate level. If the penanggalan was a cleric, she is limited to using only those spells which have a harmful effect, and she cannot turn undead. In this human form, the body of the penanggalan is also vulnerable to damage as she was before death, and her hit points remain the same as in life. The head, however, can withstand an extra 4 HD of damage.

A *know alignment* spell cast on the creature in human form reveals the alignment the penanggalan possessed while alive; as undead, at night, the creature is lawful evil.

In her human form, the penanggalan is immune to holy/unholy symbols and undead turning. She also has, in either form, the normal immunity of undead creatures to spells which attempt to control the mind or body.

Before night falls, a penanggalan must return to one of her secret lairs. She may have as many as six such lairs, all within an area of 25 square miles. At her lair, a penanggalan's head separates from its body and flies off in search of blood. The head always has its full hit points when it detaches, regardless of damage to the body.

Witnesses to this detaching of the head must make a saving throw vs. death magic or fall irretrievably unconscious for 24 hours, then remain feebleminded for three days. If the victim makes the save, he is feebleminded until dawn.



The head flies in search of a victim, its tail twitching spasmodically. If a penanggalan cannot find a female to kill, a male victim will do as a last resort. When more than one eligible female lies open to attack, a penanggalan always attacks the one with the highest Charisma. When she finds a suitable victim, the penanggalan attempts to *hypnotize* her prey, as per the 1st-level wizard spell. The victim must successfully save vs. spell with a –3 penalty, or fall under the control of the penanggalan for as long as it takes to feed. If the victim saves against the penanggalan's hypnotic suggestion, the monster cannot exert any further influence over him and flees in fear and confusion to one of her lairs for the rest of the night. Furthermore, the person who made the save becomes immune to any further attacks by that particular penanggalan, regardless of the form the monster takes.

The creature makes two small lacerations on the victim's throat and feasts on blood throughout the night. For each night's feeding, a victim loses 1d6 points of damage and one point each of Strength and Constitution. If the target's Strength or Constitution is reduced to zero, the victim dies.

The penanggalan selects the same victim each night, if possible, and continues to visit and feed on successive nights until the victim is dead. The victim must still be successfully *hypnotized* each night of the penanggalan's visitation. However, the victim's saving throw is progressively more difficult; the penalty is –4 on the second occasion, –5 on the third, and so on. A break in the sequence of one or more nights halts the progression; the saving throw penalty starts again at –3 if the penanggalan makes renewed contact after a night's respite.

If the victim survives the night, he remembers none of these events, save for some disturbingly ominous dreams, generally of dark shadowy crypts, flowing red waters, and shriveled corpses stacked like wood. If for some reason the victim avoids further attacks, even in the event of a belatedly successful save against the hypnosis, he continues to lose hit points at the rate of one per night, until he dies. *Dispel evil* cast upon the victim ends this loss.

Note that hit points drained by the penanggalan cannot be restored by magical means such as curative spells, even by powerful spells such as *regeneration*, unless *dispel evil* has been cast upon the victim. In effect, the victim's maximum hit points are being drained. Similarly, a penanggalan's victim can only recover lost Strength and Constitution points after a cleric has successfully *dispelled evil*. Once the spell has been cast successfully, a victim regains hit points at the rate of one point per day, and Strength and Constitution points at the rate of one point per week.

The victim sleeps through visitations and never actually sees her attacker, even if she successfully saves against the *hypnotism*. A penanggalan never by choice attacks a waking victim, unless that person threatens the monster's lair.

Anyone who sees the detached head of the penanggalan when it is flying, feeding, or fighting, must save vs. spell, or be overcome with fear. In this form, however, the penanggalan can be turned by a cleric; treat the monster as a wraith for turning purposes. If turned, the head flees to its nearest lair for the rest of the night, and rejoins its body just before dawn. When a priest successfully dispells a penanggalan, the creature is destroyed, and the headless body decays.

If a penanggalan kills a male victim, he does not return as undead. If an attempt is made to raise him, his chances of surviving a *resurrection* spell are halved. A female victim rises from the grave in three days as a "newborn" penanggalan, free-willed and undead. As with male victims, a woman drained by a penanggalan's chance of surviving *resurrection* is half normal within the three-day period. Should an attempt to raise the victim succeed, the victim is relegated to a week's bed rest before all damage done by the penanggalan is healed. Failure to raise a female victim is absolute. No further attempts can be made to return the body to life; the process by which the victim becomes a penanggalan is now inexorable.

A penanggalan takes normal damage from all weapons. If weaponless and in human form, a penanggalan can bite for 1d6 hit points of damage, but it tries to avoid using this form of attack lest it give away its true nature. The bite of a penanggalan when in human form does not drain hit points or abilities, nor does it cause undeath.

Habitat/Society: As a penanggalan's head flies about, it sometimes makes a hissing noise, and at other times it makes a gurgling speech that is barely recognizable as Common. A listener understands the speech if he make a successful Intelligence check. The monster usually pronounces doom or whispers secrets about what it is like to experience undeath. Those who understand the speech get a –2 penalty on the saves they make when they first witness the penanggalan's flight.

If sunlight strikes a penanggalan's head when it is separated from the body, the head becomes paralyzed and falls helplessly to the ground, where it must remain until nightfall. If head and body are not reunited within seven hours of initial exposure to daylight, both start to rapidly decay and the evil life-force which animates the creature returns to the Nine Hells. Therefore, a penanggalan always attempts to reunite her head with her body before the first rays of dawn.

The headless body of a penanggalan, if discovered by the living, appears to be merely a decapitated corpse that is very well-preserved on the outside, though if observers have the nerve to examine the neck, the internal organs are visible, and dried up as if mummified. The head knows when intruders have found its body, and actively seeks out and attempts to destroy these enemies, even though they are wakeful.

The slimy black tail protruding from the base of the head is prehensile. It can be used as a whip to snag and choke victims for 1d4 points of damage per hit, and has a Strength of 19. A penanggalan frequently attacks by biting and grappling with her tail. Treat this as a wrestling attack: if the creature gains a hold, she inflicts normal subdual damage +7 points each round for the tail's 19 Strength. In total darkness, the tail glows with an eerie black luminescence. This, coupled with the red glow from the penanggalan's eyes, makes for a truly horrific sight. People who see this glowing apparition must successfully save vs. spell or earn an additional –2 penalty when saving against the sight of the monster's full visage.

Penanggalans are solitary creatures who make their lairs in mines, ruins, crypts, underground dungeons, or other abandoned buildings or structures. These places are usually protected by simple traps such as pits, deadfalls, or poisoned spears.

These undead creatures are particularly fond of the blood of women in their late teens to early forties, with a Charisma of 13 or greater. It has been speculated that penanggalans focus on that group out of insane jealousy, since a penanggalan can no longer give or receive love. If when in human form, a penanggalan witnesses a couple being affectionate or talking of their romance, the creature succumbs to a state of homicidal fury such that she singles out the woman for attack at the earliest possible opportunity.

Penanggalans are not good at seduction. Though they can flirt in some small way while in human form, they cannot express love, or engage in any displays of affection. This weakness is enough to repulse even male vampires, who, though they sometimes have beautiful vampiric women as their consorts, would never consider a penanggalan as a companion. Sometimes, vampires indirectly give clues to help a party of adventurers locate a penanggalan's lair, in the hopes that the heroes will destroy her.

When in human form, a penanggalan seeks parties of unwary travelers to befriend. The creature attempts to join them, and might in fact prove extremely useful. Over her years of undeath, she often picks up many skills and languages, and scores of details about the area she frequents. Naturally, the penanggalan has a plausible explanation for her impressive knowledge. She is not above making deliberate errors, or feigning ignorance in some areas, to deflect the suspicion of party members who wonder how their new companion manages to be nearly omniscient.

A penanggalan who joins a party never camps with the party for the night, nor does she accompany them to the nocturnal safety of an inn. The creature begs off, making excuses about other duties. She might slyly offer to keep guard while the others sleep. Many penanggalans attempt to pass themselves off as rangers who are known for their vigilance.

Ecology: Other than the blood they drain from their victims, penanggalans do not eat or drink, though they often pretend to do so to hide their true nature from potential victims. The slimy tail of the penanggalan's head is useful in creating various types of *potions of undead control*, as well as *amulets of turning*.

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